

Off-Leash Area Expansion Study

Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners

Presenters:

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Seattle
Parks & Recreation

Healthy People, Thriving Environment, Vibrant Community



#SeattleShines



- The history of Seattle's Off-Leash Area Program
- The current status of Seattle's Off-Leash Area Program
- Overview of Off-Leash Area Expansion Study
- Next Steps: SPR's Plan for Public Engagement and beyond

City Council Resolution #29628, 1997

- Created the Off-Leash Area System and provided guidance for selecting sites for future Off-Leash Area development.

“People, Dogs, and Parks” Plan, 2017

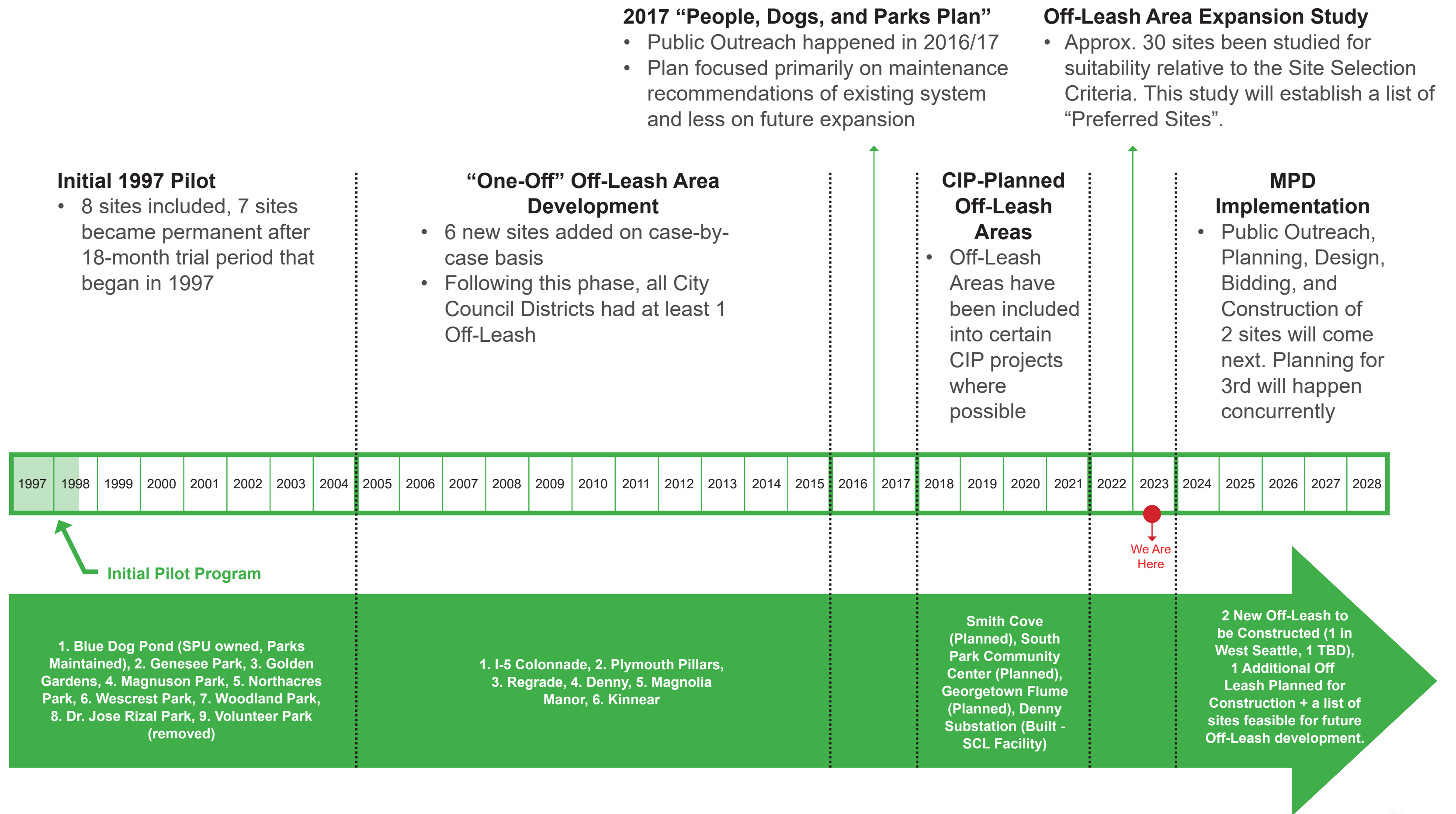
- This plan was developed by SPR in 2017 and it focused primarily on maintenance recommendations of the existing Off-Leash Area System.
- This plan also provided additional guidance for selecting sites for future Off-Leash Area development but stopped short of recommending specific sites.
- This plan was formally adopted by City Council in 2017.

Recent Increase in Dog Ownership in Seattle

- It is a common adage that “Seattle has more dogs than children”. According to Census Data, it’s true. In 2021, it was estimated that Seattle had 153,000 dogs, and 107,000 children.

MPD Funding - “Off-Leash Area Expansion Study”

- Funding is available to build 2 new Off-Leash Areas and design a 3rd. This is a study to determine suitable sites for new Off-Leash Areas within the existing Seattle Park System.



Site Selection Criteria were formalized in the 1997 City Council Resolution and expanded upon in 2017 “People, Dogs, and Parks” Plan.



Site Selection Criteria:

- Not conflict with existing park uses in a way that creates safety issues
- Not be located in a park that is a designated Seattle landmark, or be listed on the State or Federal register of historic places
- Not be located in natural areas under active restoration, or in an environmentally-critical area
- Have preliminary approval from the site owner, if not on Parks land

Other Considerations:

- Geographic Need
- Site must be Accessible (or a plan must be created to make it accessible)
- Site must not have significant vegetation and large trees
- Proposed site must be at least 50 ft. away from other property lines
- Flat sites are preferred to slopes, because surfacing erodes over time on slopes
- Consideration for access to parking spots or accessibility by public transportation

CHALLENGES WITH OFF-LEASH PARKS

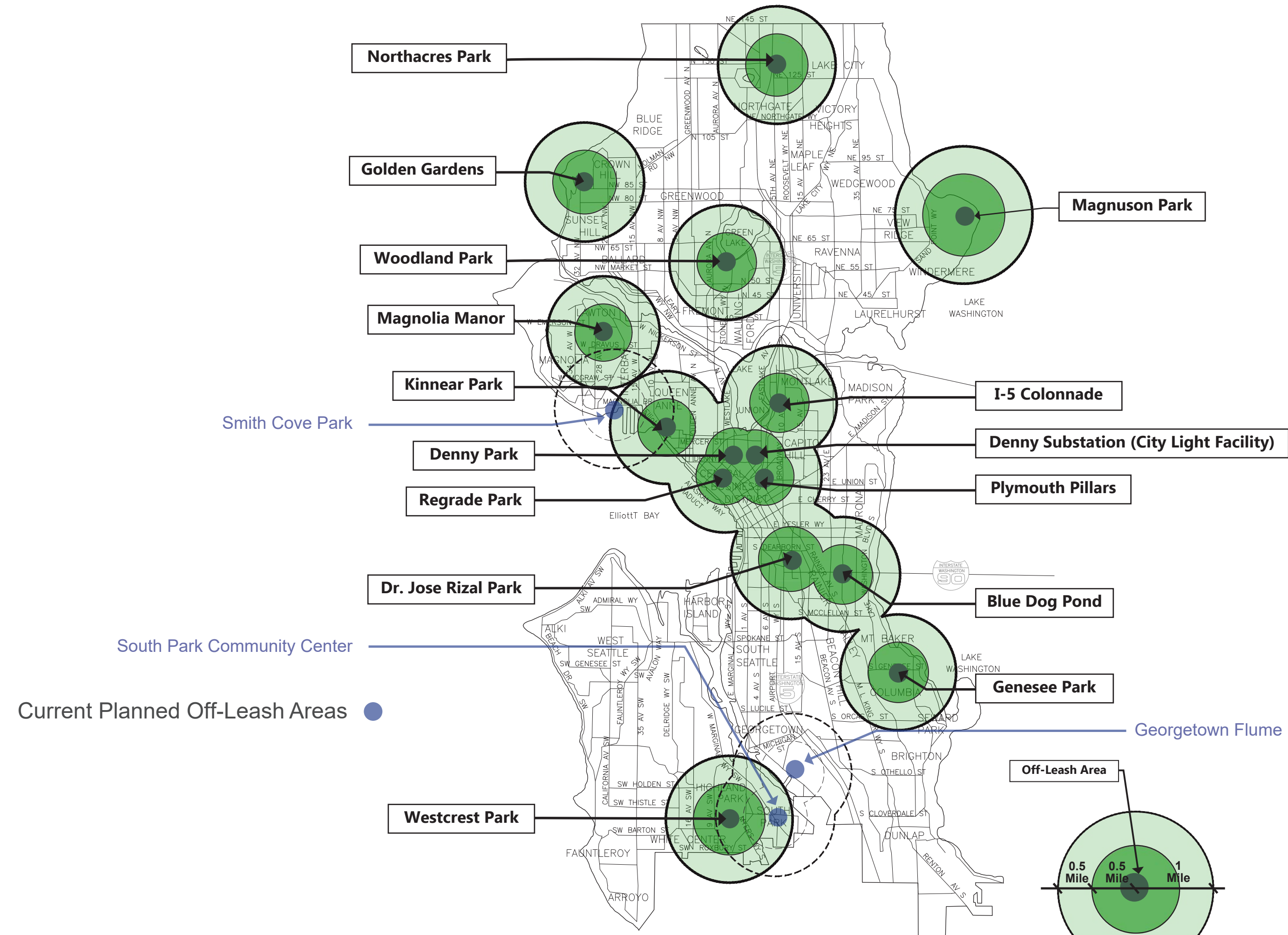
It was the hope of city officials that violations of the leash, license and scoop laws would drop with the advent of off-leash areas, but that was not the case. About 26 percent of Seattle dog owners admit to exercising their dogs illegally in non-off leash areas in ballfields, tennis courts, play areas, turf areas, shorelines, beaches and trails. This can result in environmental degradation, children coming in contact with dog feces and confrontations over use of park space. Animal enforcement staff have never been able to keep up with the level of violations. Any discussion of off-leash areas leads to a discussion of off-leash dogs and inadequate enforcement. Park District funding has recently provided a new, two-person enforcement team dedicated to park lands.

Not everyone supports off-leash areas. People oppose them for reasons that include competition for already scarce green space in dense urban environments, incompatibility with wildlife and habitat, concern for children, neighborhood noise, water quality, turf destruction, tree health, smells and other issues.

The evolution of the off-leash areas program in Seattle reflects how difficult it is to identify sites that are appropriate as OLAs and the complexity of the steps that lead up to opening one.



DOGS AT WARREN G. MAGNUSON DOG PARK



Existing OLA System

Northwest Seattle
Sandel Park
Gasworks Park
Salmon Bay Park
Ballard Commons

Northeast Seattle
Laurelhurst Community Center
Ravenna Park
View Ridge Playfield
Bryant Park
Dahl Playfield
Hubbard Homestead

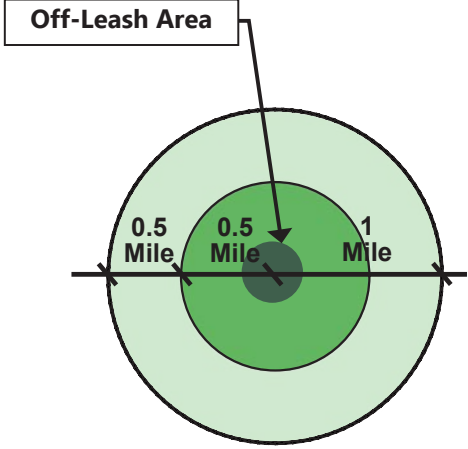
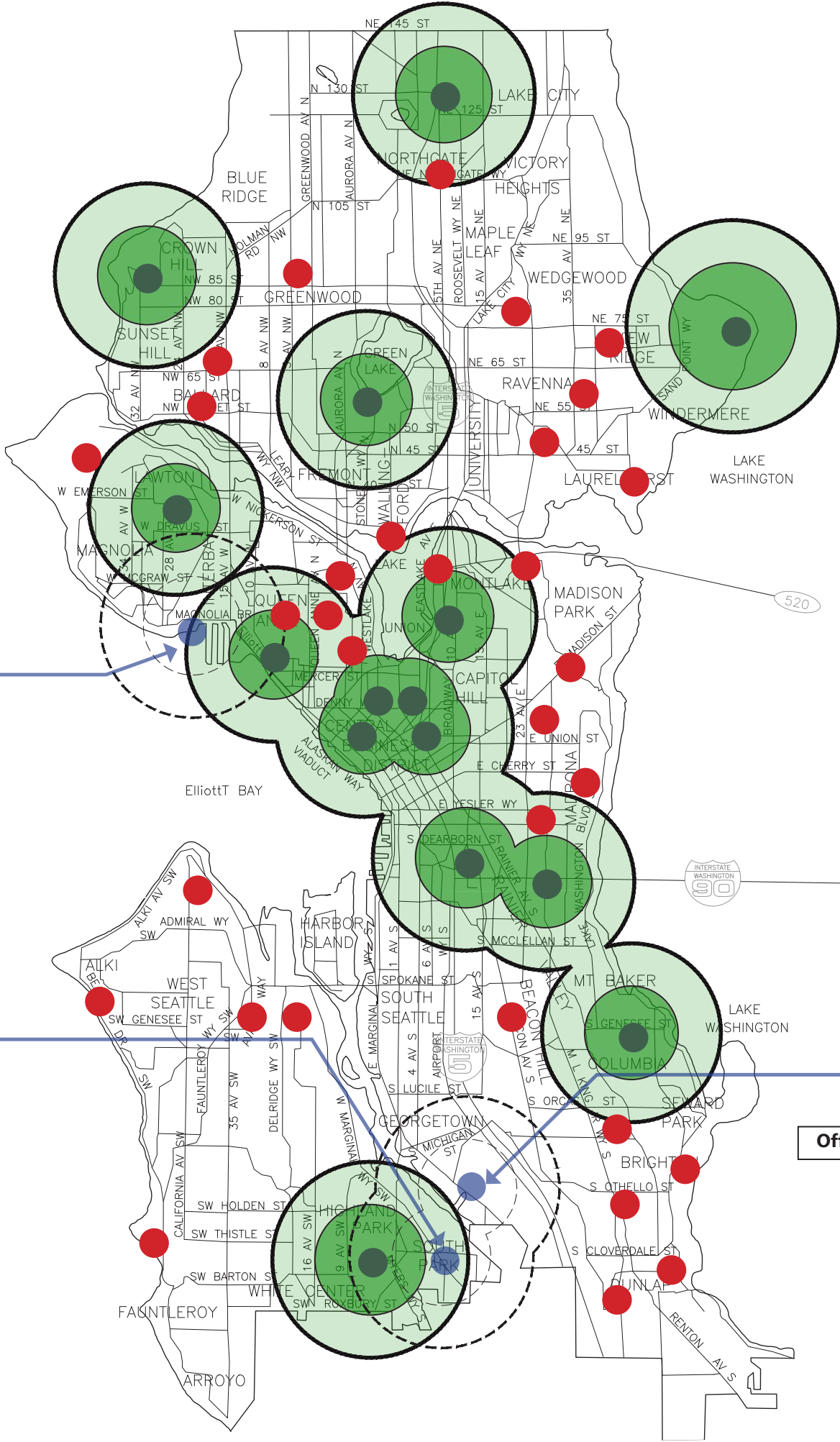
Central West Seattle
Bhy Kracke Park
Mayfair Park
East Queen Anne Playground
West Queen Anne Playground
Discovery Park North Parking Lot
Smith Cove Park

Central East Seattle
Washington Park Playfield
Homer Harris Park
Rogers Playground
Powell Barnett Park
Montlake Community Center
Dr. Blanche Lavizzo Park

West Seattle
Lincoln Park
Me-Kwa-Mooks Park
Hamilton Viewpoint
West Seattle Stadium
Delridge Community Center
South Park Community Center

Southeast Seattle
Rainier Beach Community Center
Othello Park
Benefit Playground
Martha Washington Park
Jefferson Park
Brighton Playfield
Georgetown Flume

- Current Planned Off-Leash Areas ●
- Potential Sites for Future Off-Leash Area Development ●
- Existing Off-Leash Area ●



Existing OLAs, Planned OLAs, Studied OLAs

This matrix provides an assessment of each site according to the Site Selection Criteria.



Studied Sites

Using the Site Selection Criteria, we narrowed the list of 32 sites down to 9 “Preferred Sites”

West Seattle
(Must get Off-Leash per MPD)

| Site Selection Criteria: | Lincoln Park | West Seattle Stadium | East Queen Anne PG | Discovery Park | Ravenna Park | View Ridge Playfield | Powell Barnett Park | Othello Park | Brighton Playfield |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cannot conflict with existing park uses in a way that creates safety issues | Minor Issue - Easy fix | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | Minor Issue - Easy fix | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | Minor Issue - Easy fix | Minor Issue - Easy fix | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | Minor Issue - Easy fix |
| Cannot be located in a park that is a designated Seattle landmark | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development |
| No ECA's, natural areas | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | Minor Issue - Easy fix | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | Bigger Issue - Needs more discussion | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development |
| Must have preliminary approval from the site owner, if not on Parks land | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | Bigger Issue - Needs more discussion | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | Minor Issue - Easy fix | Bigger Issue - Needs more discussion | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development |

Other Considerations:

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Geographic need | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | Minor Issue - Easy fix | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | Minor Issue - Easy fix | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development |
| Accessible (or a plan must be created to make it Accessible) | Minor Issue - Easy fix | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | Minor Issue - Easy fix | Minor Issue - Easy fix |
| No significant vegetation | Minor Issue - Easy fix | Minor Issue - Easy fix | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | Minor Issue - Easy fix | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | Minor Issue - Easy fix |
| At least 50 ft. away from other property lines | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development |
| Flat Site | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | Minor Issue - Easy fix | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development |
| Access to parking spots or accessibility by public transportation | Minor Issue - Easy fix | Minor Issue - Easy fix | Bigger Issue - Needs more discussion | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | Minor Issue - Easy fix | Bigger Issue - Needs more discussion | Bigger Issue - Needs more discussion | Bigger Issue - Needs more discussion | Minor Issue - Easy fix |
| High visibility into the site | Minor Issue - Easy fix | Minor Issue - Easy fix | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | Minor Issue - Easy fix | Minor Issue - Easy fix | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development | No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development |

Legend:

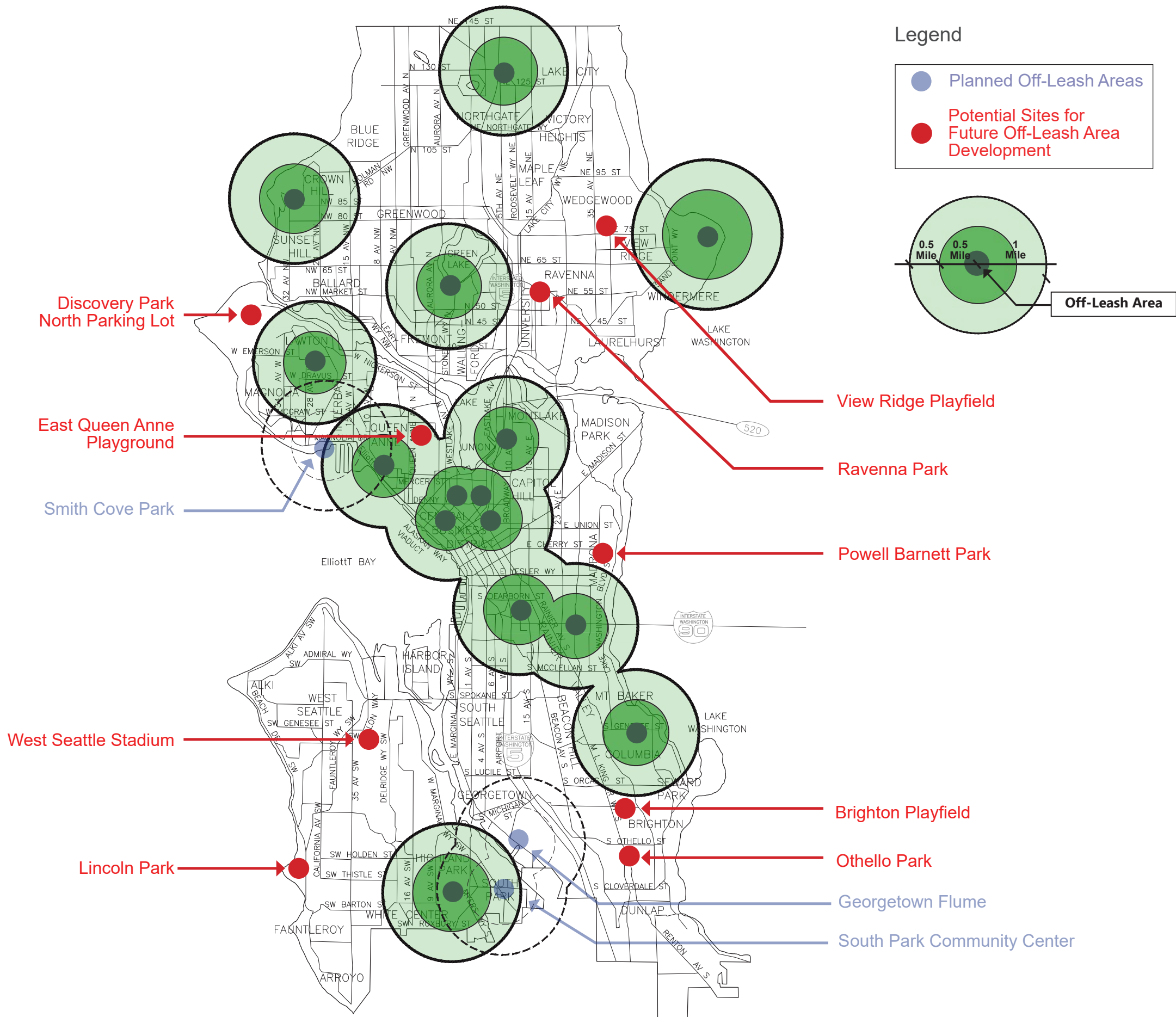
No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development

Minor Issue - Easy fix

Bigger Issue - Needs more discussion

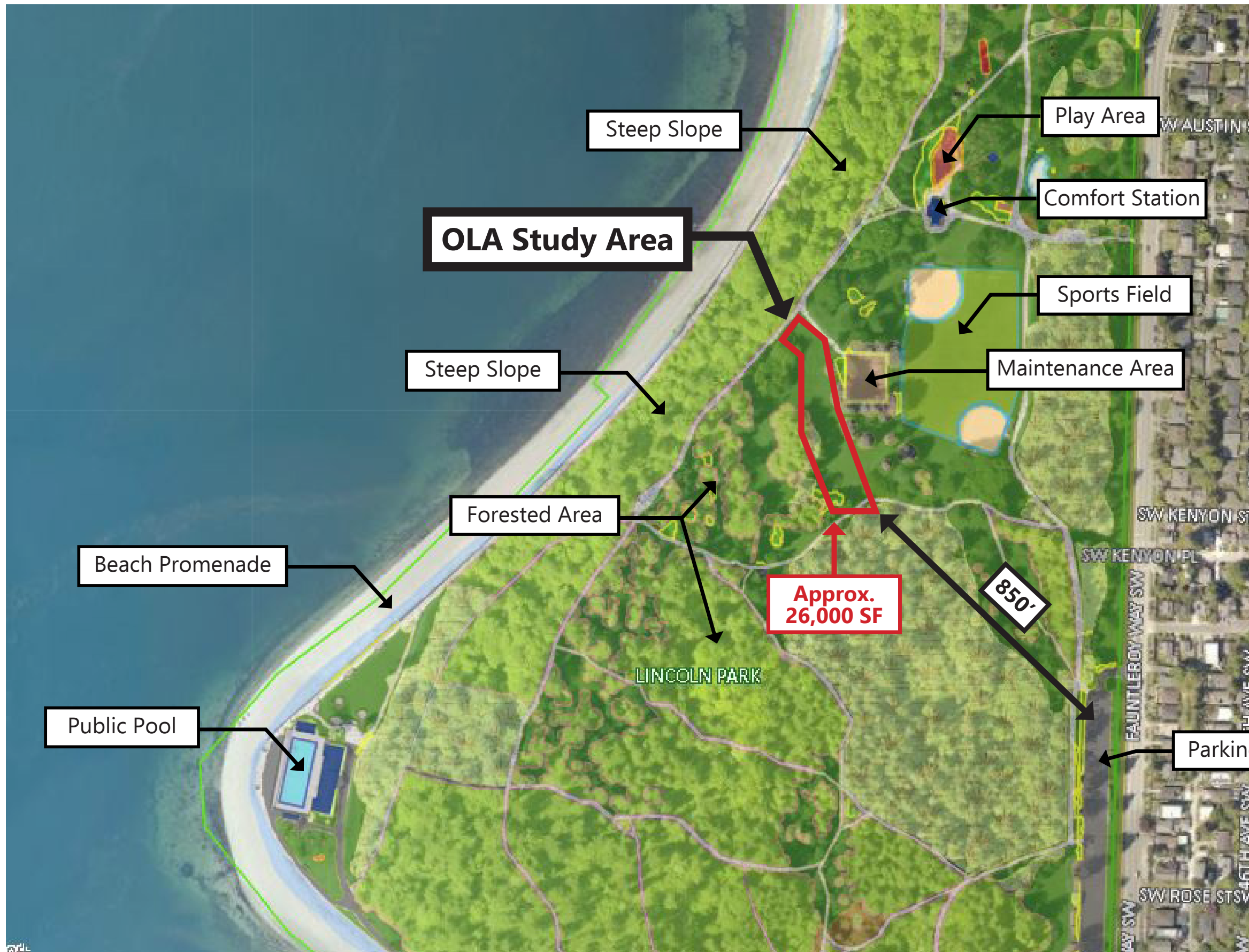
Preferred Sites





Existing OLAs, Planned OLAs, Preferred Sites

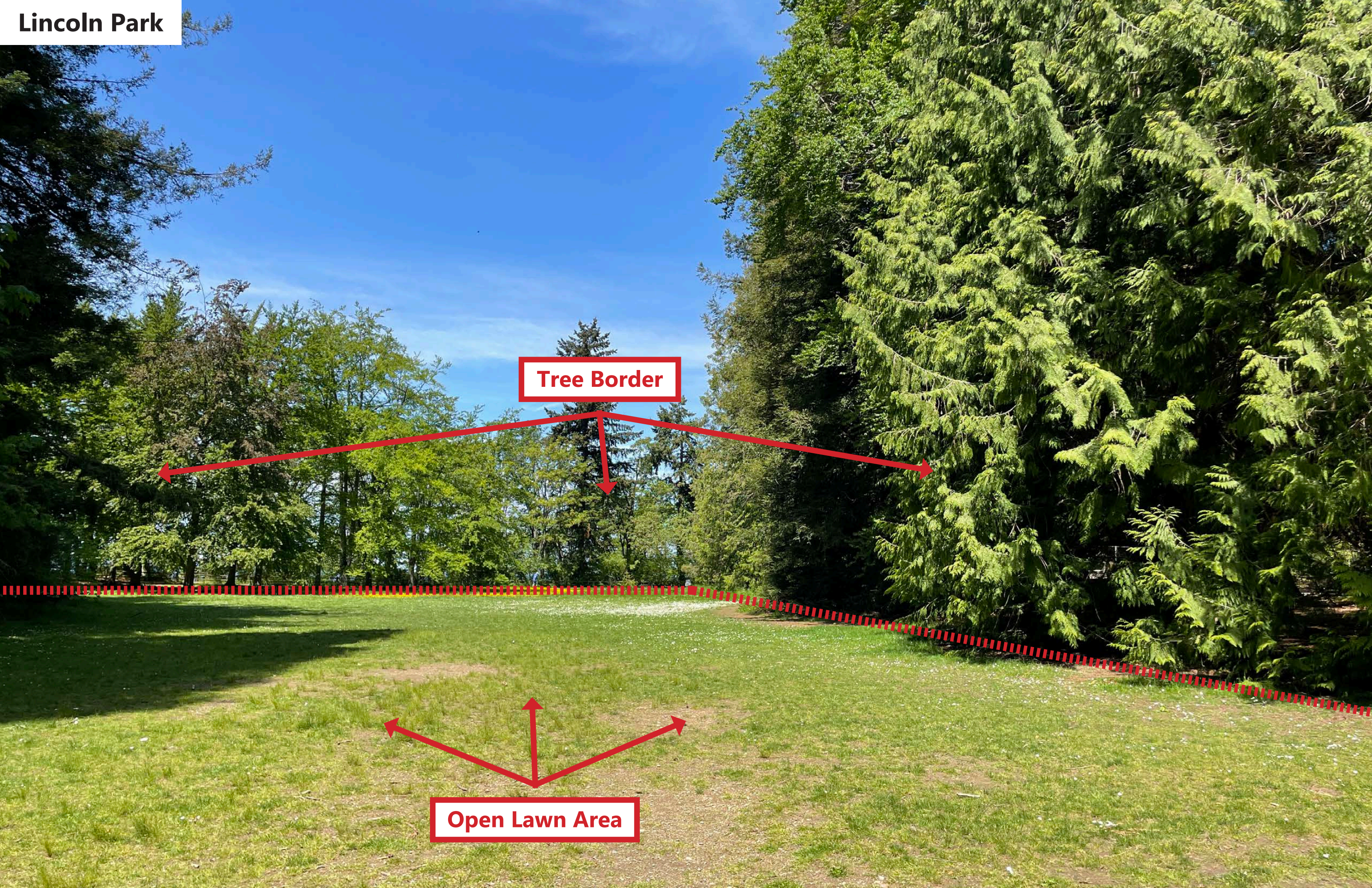
The following slides provide Due Diligence Findings for all of the 9 “Preferred Sites”



Due Diligence Findings:

- This site is a large lawn area that is bounded by trees.
- This site is mostly flat which is ideal for Off-Leash Area development.
- This site is a long walk from the nearest parking area which is a negative. However, there are no immediate adjacent uses that would conflict with an Off-Leash Area which is a positive.
- Because Lincoln Park is a regional destination, this site would serve dog owners from West Seattle and beyond.
- The nearest Off-Leash Area is Westcrest Park which is a 3.5 mile drive from Lincoln Park.

Lincoln Park - Adjacent Uses



Tree Border

Open Lawn Area



Due Diligence Findings:

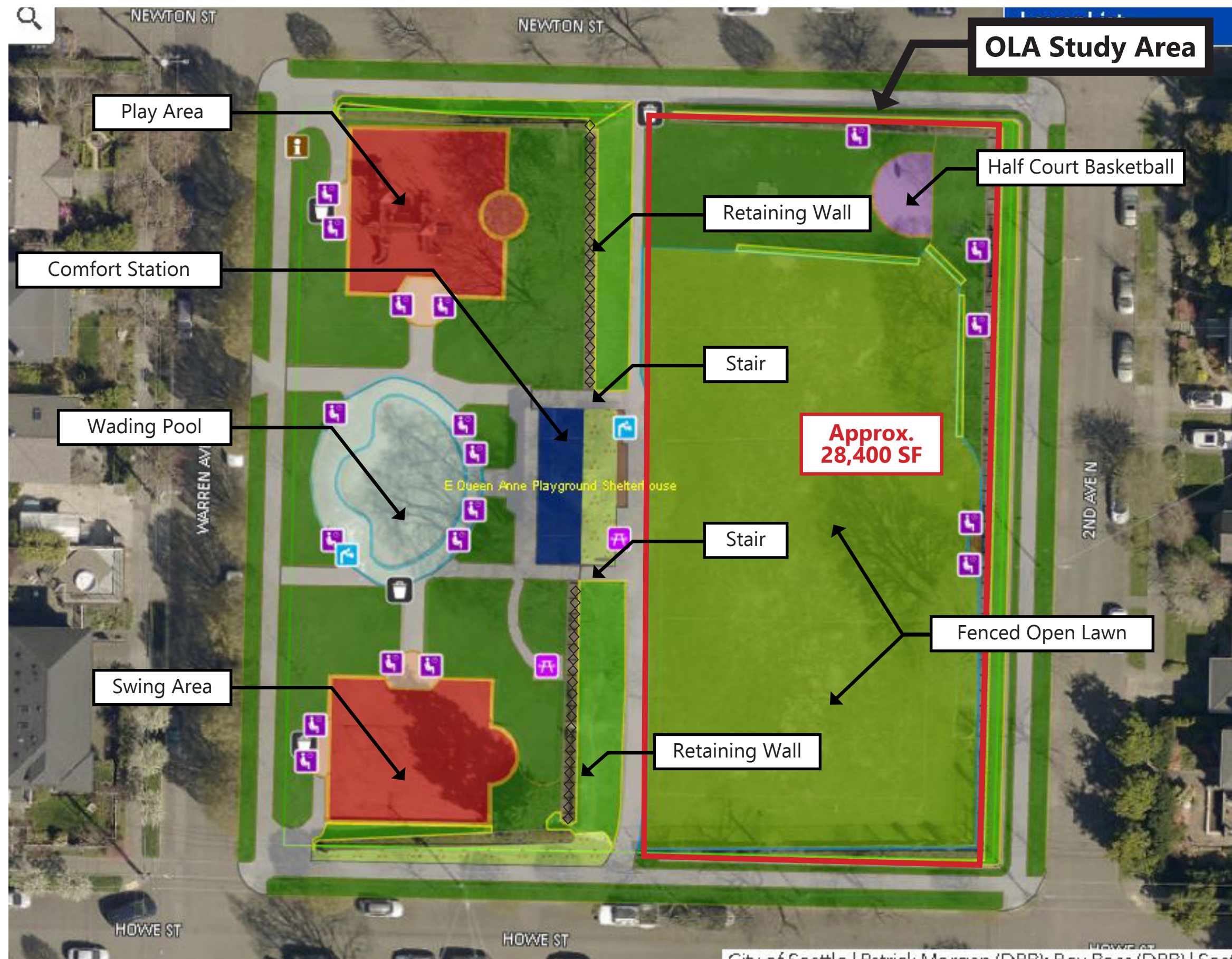
- This site is currently an overflow parking area which is used during large events.
- This site is bounded by trees.
- This site is mostly flat which is ideal for Off-Leash Area development.
- This site is adjacent to the West Seattle Junction Urban Village and would serve many dog owners in an area with growing density and public transit availability
- During large events at West Seattle Stadium, there is high demand for parking which may be difficult to replace.
- The nearest Off-Leash Area is Westcrest Park which is a 4.0 mile drive from West Seattle Stadium.

West Seattle Stadium - Site Context

West Seattle Stadium



**Supplementary Stadium
Parking**



Due Diligence Findings:

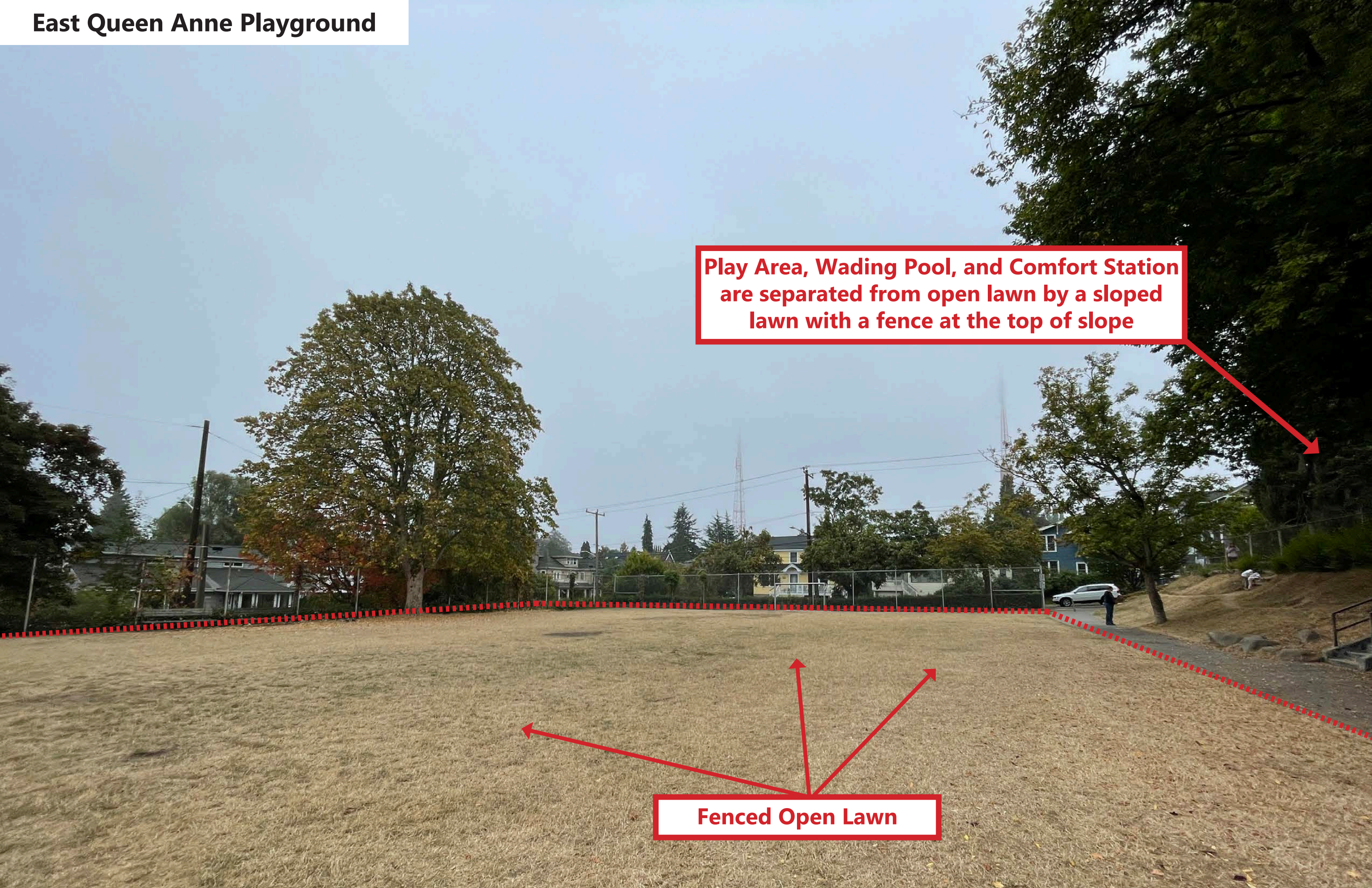
- This site is a flat lawn that is currently being used as a practice space for youth sports teams.
- This park has a Play Area, Comfort Station, and Wading Pool. However, these features are well separated from the Off-Leash Area Study Site by a sloped lawn, retaining wall, and fencing.
- The site has no parking. This could lead to additional traffic and double-parking in the neighborhood
- The nearest Off-Leash Area is Lower Kinnear Park which is a 1.5 mile drive from East Queen Anne Playground.

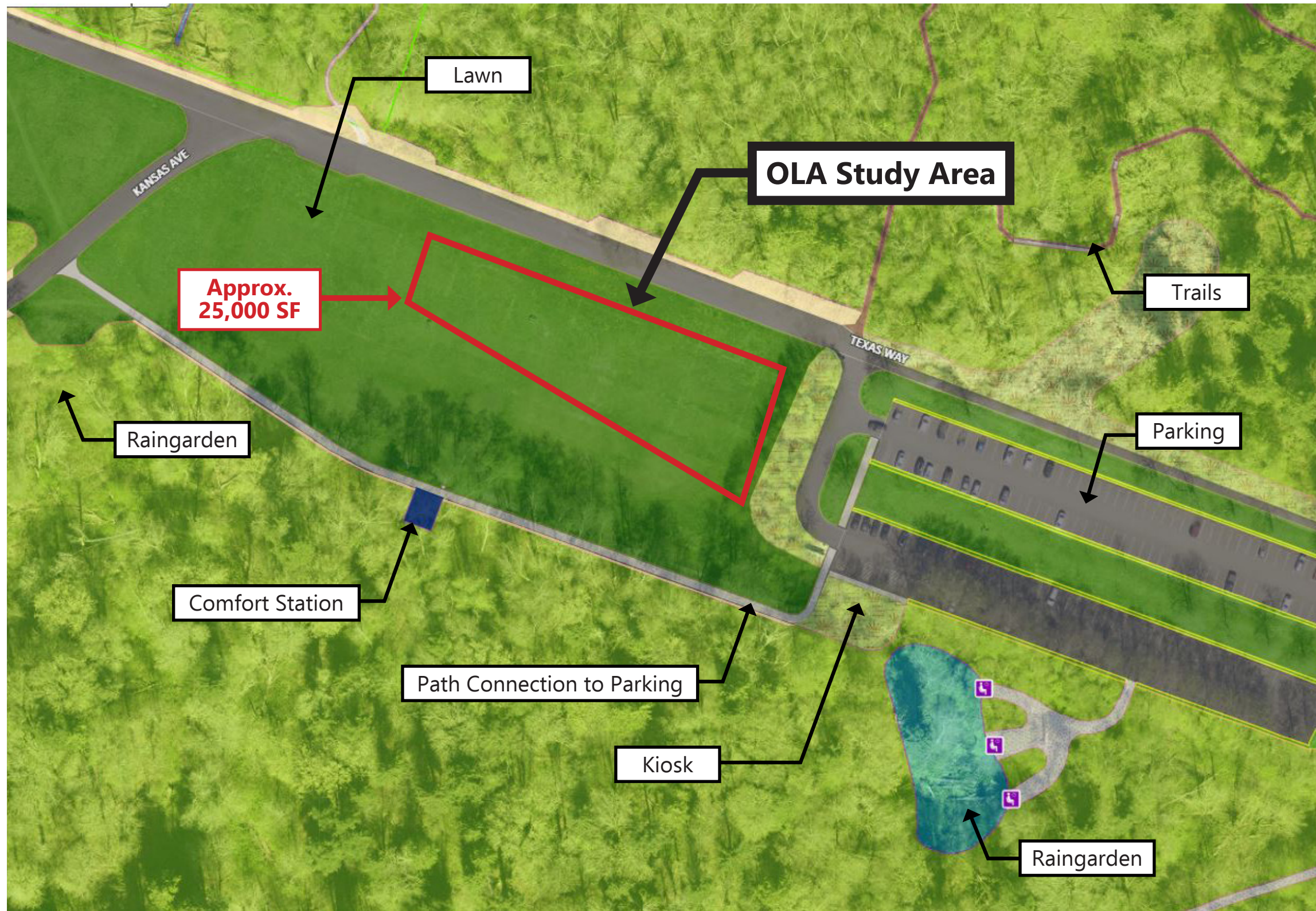
East Queen Anne Playground - Adjacent Uses

East Queen Anne Playground

**Play Area, Wading Pool, and Comfort Station
are separated from open lawn by a sloped
lawn with a fence at the top of slope**

Fenced Open Lawn





Due Diligence Findings:

- This site is a large lawn area that has a busy walking path to the North.
- This site is mostly flat which is ideal for Off-Leash Area development.
- This site is near some "Environmentally Critical Areas" that would need to be rigorously protected.
- Because Discovery Park is a regional destination, this site would serve dog owners from Magnolia and beyond.
- The nearest Off-Leash Area is Magnolia Manor Park which is a 1.9 mile drive from Discovery Park.

Discovery Park North Parking Lot - Adjacent Use

Discovery Park North Parking Lot



Lawn

Comfort Station

Walking Path



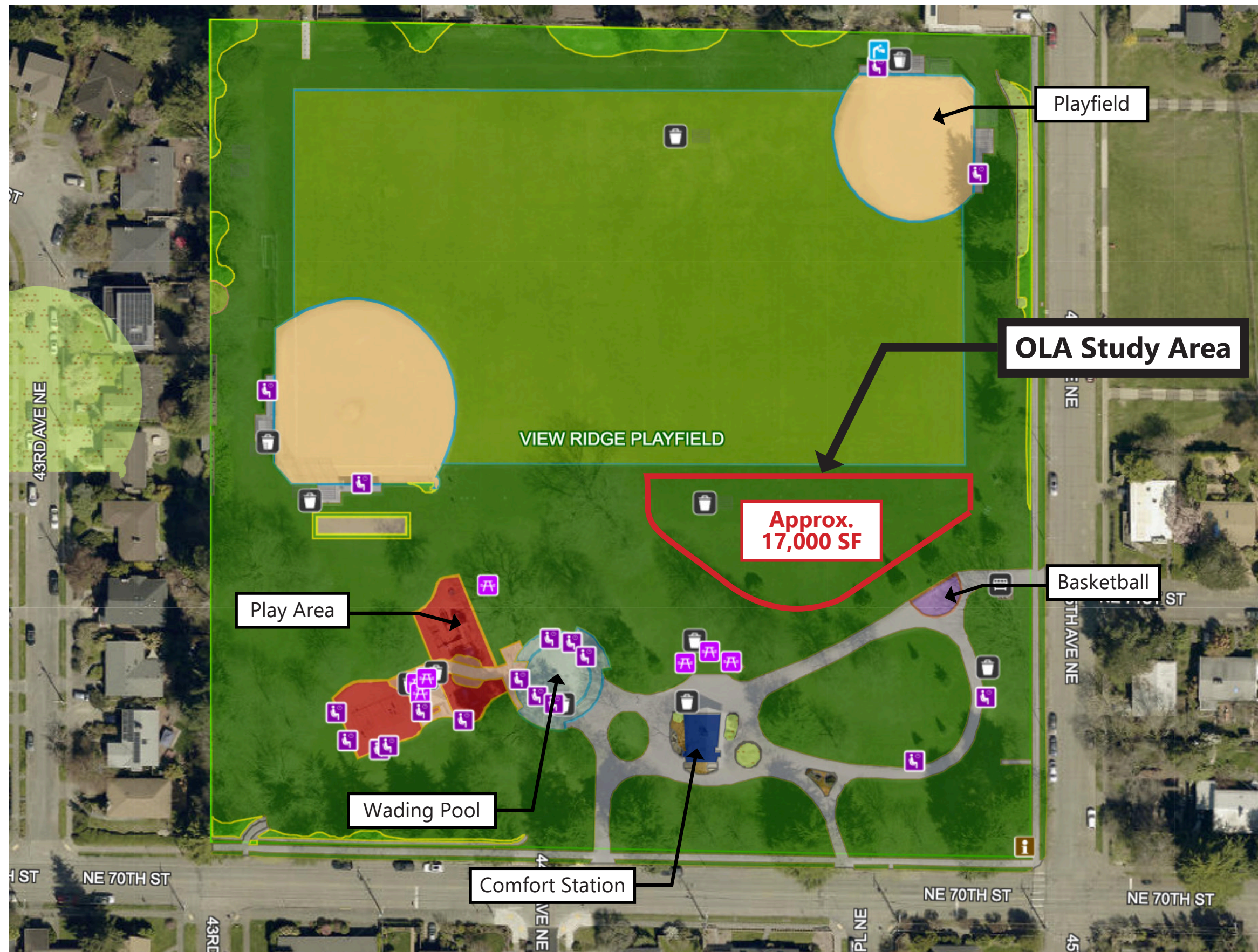
Due Diligence Findings:

- This site is a gently-sloping lawn area that is bounded by trees.
- This park has a Play Area, Comfort Station, Tennis Courts, and Wading Pool. However, these features are well separated from the Off-Leash Area Study Site by a sloped lawn, retaining wall, and fencing.
- The site has very little parking. This could lead to additional traffic and double-parking in the neighborhood
- The nearest Off-Leash Area is Lower Woodland Park which is a 2.5 mile drive from Ravenna Park.

Ravenna Park - Adjacent Uses



Gently Sloping Lawn



Due Diligence Findings:

- This site is a lawn area between the Basketball Court and the Playfield.
- This park has a Play Area, Comfort Station, and Wading Pool. However, these features are well separated from the Off-Leash Area Study Site by a large space of lawn and trees.
- The site has no parking. This could lead to additional traffic and double-parking in the neighborhood
- The nearest Off-Leash Area is Magnuson Park which is a 1.3 mile drive from View Ridge Playfield.

View Ridge Playfield - Adjacent Uses

View Ridge Playfield

Wading Pool



Lawn



Playfield





Due Diligence Findings:

- This site is a lawn area on the North end of the park.
- This park has a Play Area, Comfort Station, Basketball Court, and Wading Pool.
- This park has 3 clearly defined entrances along Martin Luther King Jr Way. There could be conflicts between dog owners and non-dog owners at these entrances.
- Adjacency to the 23rd & Union-Jackson Residential Urban Village means this site would serve many dog owners in an area with growing density and public transit availability.
- The site has no parking. This could lead to additional traffic and double-parking in the neighborhood.
- The nearest Off-Leash Area is Blue Dog Pond which is a 1.2 mile drive from Powell Barnett Park.

Powell Barnett Park - Adjacent Uses

Powell Barnett Park



Seating

Lawn

Steep Slope



Due Diligence Findings:

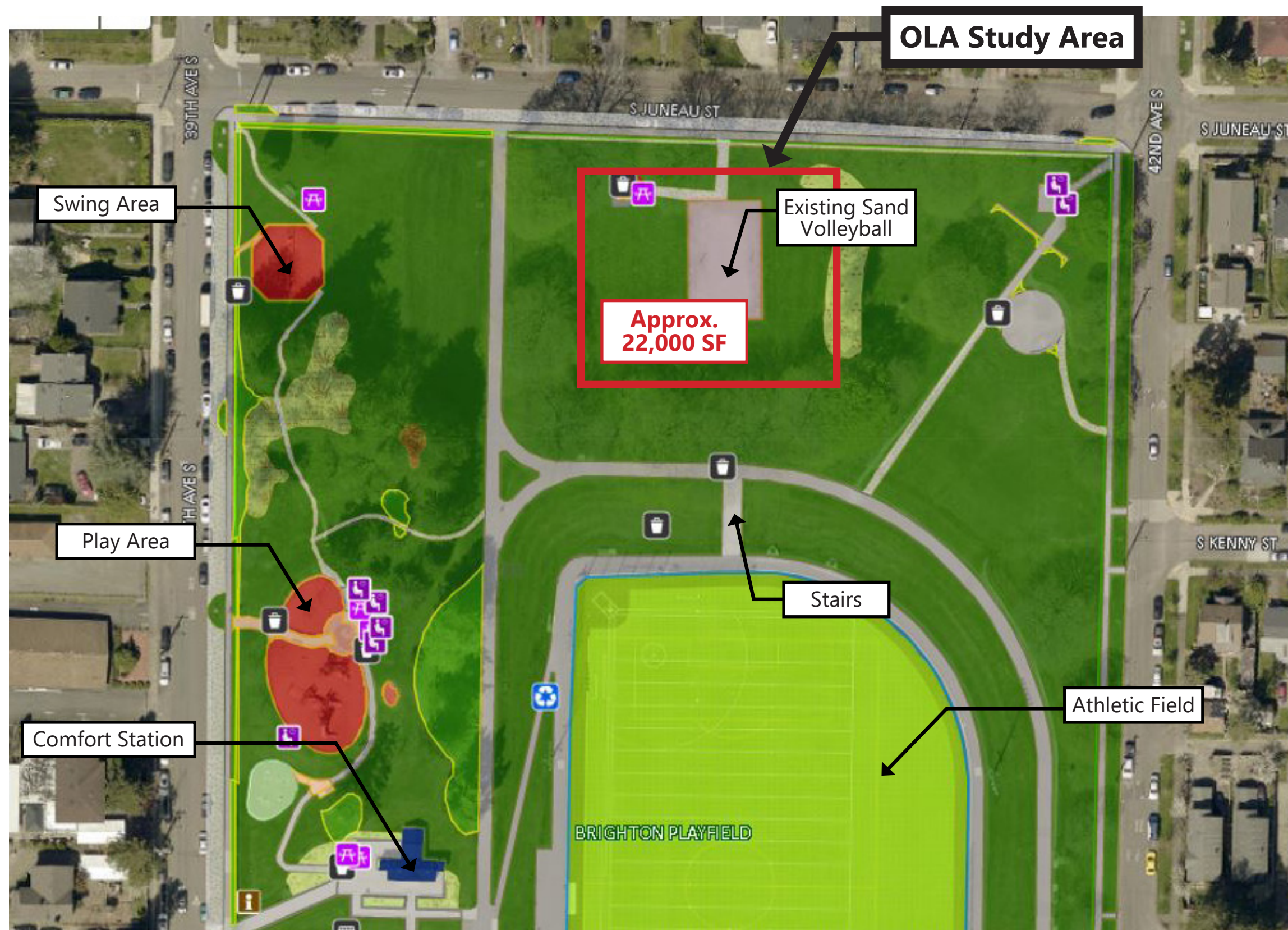
- This site is a gently-sloping lawn area in the Southwest corner of the park.
- This park has a Play Area, Comfort Station, and multiple Basketball Courts. The Off-Leash Area study site is well separated from these uses by a large sloped lawn.
- Within the Othello Residential Urban Village means this would serve many dog owners in an area with growing density and public transit availability
- The site has no parking. This could lead to additional traffic and double-parking in the neighborhood.
- The nearest Off-Leash Area is Genesee Park which is a 2.8 mile drive from Othello Playground.

Othello Playground - Adjacent Use

Othello Playground



Gently Sloping Lawn

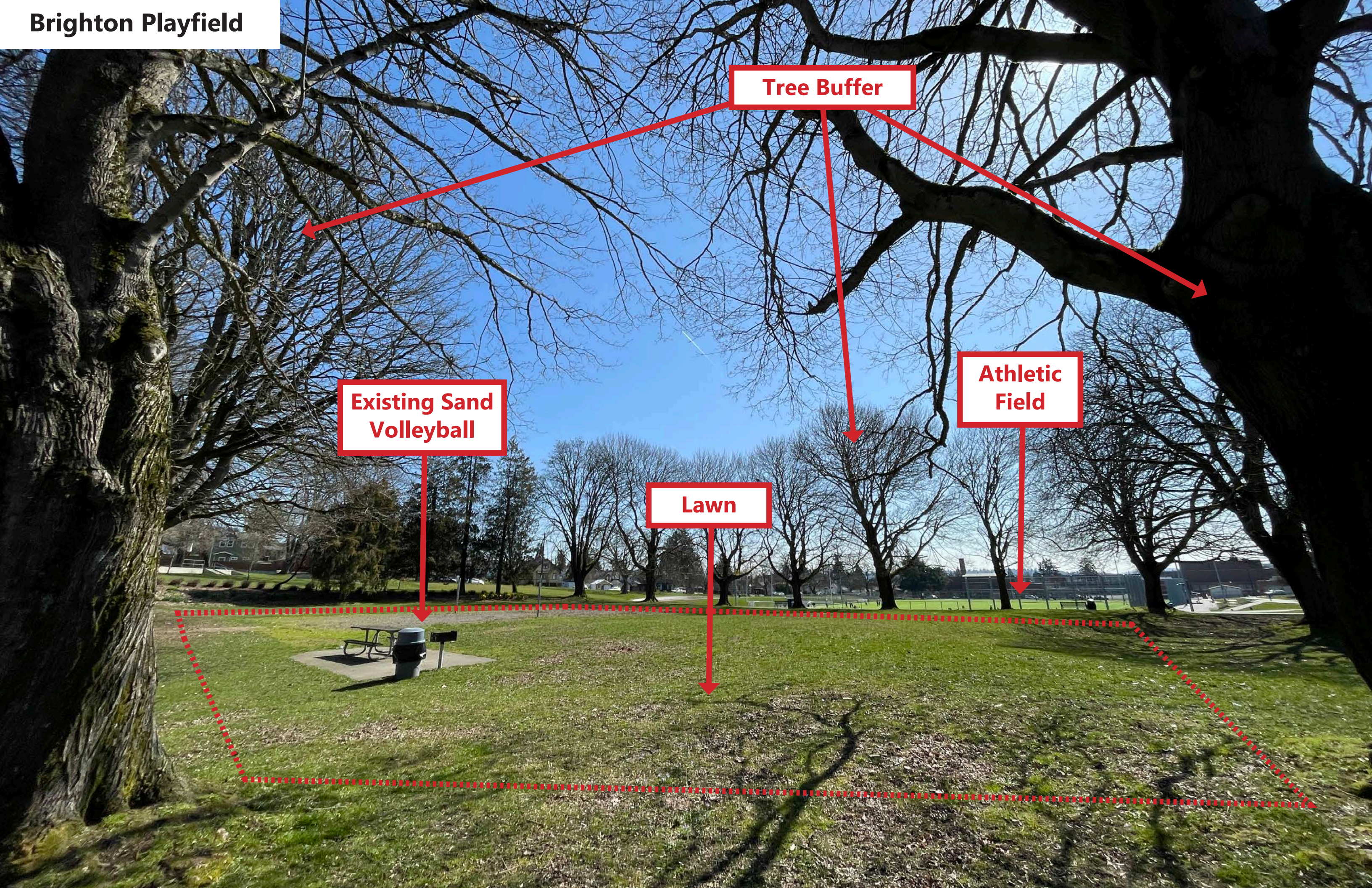


Due Diligence Findings:

- This site flat lawn that is currently used as a Sand Volleyball play space. The Site is bounded by large trees. The Sand Volleyball Space would need to be relocated within the Park.
- This park has a Playfield, Play Area, Comfort Station, and multiple Basketball Courts. The Off-Leash Area study site is well separated from these uses by a large sloped lawn.
- Adjacency to the Othello Residential Urban Village means this would serve many dog owners in an area with growing density and public transit availability
- The site has no parking. This could lead to additional traffic and double-parking in the neighborhood.
- The nearest Off-Leash Area is Genesee Park which is a 1.4 mile drive from Brighton Playfield.

Brighton Playfield - Adjacent Use

Brighton Playfield



Tree Buffer

**Existing Sand
Volleyball**

Lawn

**Athletic
Field**

- Online survey on recommended sites available starting June 9th, closing on July 31st
- In-person engagement opportunities to inform community and answer questions
- Dates & locations to be announced soon
- SPR collects and synthesizes public input on OLA Study sites
- Further engagement with nearby residents of the 2 selected sites, for which we have funding available

Next Steps

Thank you!



Seattle
Parks & Recreation

Healthy People, Thriving Environment, Vibrant Community



Photo Credit: The Seattle Times