



CITY OF KIRKLAND
Department of Parks & Community Services
505 Market Street, Suite A, Kirkland, WA 98033 425.587.3300
www.ci.kirkland.wa.us

MEMORANDUM

To: City Council
From: Bob Kamuda, Chair, Park Board
Date: October 20, 2010
Subject: Off-Leash Area Proposal

RECOMMENDATION:

The Park Board recommends that the City Council authorize the Parks and Community Services Department to enter into an agreement with Kirkland Dog Off-leash Group (KDOG) for the development and operation of a designated, fenced Off-Leash Area (OLA) on vacant City-owned park land south of the Heronfield Wetlands.

BACKGROUND:

In April of this year the City Council directed the Park Board and staff to investigate a proposal to create a designated Off-Leash Area (OLA), or "dog park", on undeveloped park land south of the Heronfield Wetlands (the former Schott family property). This 7.5 acre site was purchased by the City in 2005.

Over recent months the Board and staff have worked with the local organization KDOG to study the site and its suitability as an OLA. **KDOG has agreed to fund all direct costs associated with both the development and on-going stewardship of the facility** should the site be deemed suitable and its use as an OLA be approved.

Some of the major questions we asked and a summary of our conclusions include:

❖ Is the site suitable as an OLA?

In short, we believe the answer is yes. From the standpoint of physical characteristics, size, and location **this unused park site is quite sufficient to serve as a designated, fenced off leash area.**

Physical characteristics. One of our early tasks was to complete a wetland delineation study for the site, since the adjacent Heronfield Wetlands extend from the north onto the property. The wetland study, funded in total by KDOG, identified the edge of the Type I wetland and its associated 100-foot protective buffer. The remainder of the site is comprised of a relatively flat former pasture encumbered with invasive Himalayan blackberry shrubs and a sloping wooded area which provides shade and visual interest. **All significant trees on the site can be retained** unless assessed as a safety hazard. Fencing and signage will need to be installed to **protect the existing wetland.**

Size. While the wetland and buffer encompass a large portion of the property, **as much as 2.5 acres of upland remains available for use as an OLA.** Not as big perhaps as some dog parks in the area, but according to KDOG very adequate for a successful off leash area.

Location. Part of the initial appeal of the site to us was its location – relatively isolated from adjoining properties yet not too difficult to find. The property is surrounded by a mixture of land uses, including office, single family residential, and multi-family residential. Residential properties are considerably buffered by a combination of distance, topography, and vegetation.

Traffic and Parking. It is somewhat of a challenge to quantify the expected daily use of an OLA at the proposed location, since OLA's in the region seem to each have unique dynamics and we have no history in Kirkland on which to judge. Based on a similar facility in Mountlake Terrace, KDOG is estimating that use of the OLA will stabilize at an **average total daily use of approximately 40 dogs (weekdays) and 85 dogs (weekends)**. Peak times are typically midday and early evening, with up to 10 vehicle parking spaces required.

As a Board, one of the critical factors we have evaluated with this proposed site has been the need for parking. Based on anticipated usage of the OLA we believe **there is adequate on-street parking** on both N.E. 120th Street and 113th Avenue N.E. This will require users to walk about 80 to 100 yards to enter the fenced OLA - not uncommon for many of our outdoor recreation facilities and parks. (It should be noted that an important purpose and benefit of an off-leash area is for exercise, after all). Pedestrian access would be achieved via an existing dedicated public pedestrian trail on the eastern edge of the Kirkland 405 Corporate Center bordering the park site.

At this point, managers of the adjacent office building have been unable to commit to any shared/leased parking arrangement (Verizon Communications manages an important switching facility in the adjacent building and has some significant operational and security requirements). Should the OLA be approved by Council, it will be important for KDOG to work closely with Verizon officials in order to be respectful, good neighbors. At a minimum, signage directing users to not park on private property should be installed, as well as provisions for dealing with problems should they arise in the future.

Please see the attached presentation summary detailing site-related issues.

❖ **Is KDOG a viable City partner for the OLA?**

As a Board, we have been impressed with KDOG's dedication, energy, and organizational skills. This diverse group of local dog owners has committed to ensuring that the proposed OLA be successful. Success could be measured threefold: (a) that the OLA is well-used and generally meets the needs of dogs and their owners; (b) that the OLA is a "good neighbor" and is welcomed into the community; and (c) that KDOG is able to maintain its obligation as on-going managers of the facility. To reiterate, KDOG has agreed to fund all costs associated with both the construction of the OLA as well as its ongoing operations. Under this recommendation, **no City funds would be used to create and operate the proposed off-leash area.**

Construction-related costs would include those involving site-clearing, invasive plant removal, installation of fencing (both for wetland protection and for containing/defining the OLA); play surface materials such as woodchips, sand, etc.; signage; woodland trail development; and site amenities such as benches, tables, and an information kiosk. Preliminarily KDOG is estimating a total cost of \$25,000 - \$30,000 to create the OLA, which would be secured through a combination of donated funds, labor, equipment, and materials. KDOG has informed us that they have a number of local contractors ready to assist with the project, and they have made a significant head start with their fundraising.

On-going maintenance costs would be those related to replacement of surface material, repair of fencing and site amenities as necessary, removal of waste, liability insurance, etc. Similar OLA's in the region budget up to \$5,000 - \$6,000 per year for operational needs.

Please see the attached presentation summary from KDOG expanding upon their organizational history and their proposal for the OLA. **The Park Board recommends that the City enter into a partnership agreement with KDOG for development and operation of the Kirkland Off-Leash Area.**

❖ **Is the community supportive of an OLA at the proposed site?**

At the Board's meeting on October 13 a public hearing was held in order to receive citizen comment on the OLA proposal. The public hearing was advertised in several ways, including a news release, information placed on the City's webpage, printed flyers placed at public buildings, and email outreach to neighborhood associations. A public notice was mailed to all properties within 300 feet of the proposed site. In addition, staff and Board representatives attended meetings of the Juanita and the Totem Lake neighborhood associations to discuss the proposal and answer questions.

About a dozen citizens spoke at the hearing, with another four dozen in attendance. We also received comments from several citizens via email. **Comments received, both in person and in writing, were almost entirely in support of the proposal.** Concerns we did hear were primarily related to ensuring that the City does not fund the project, as well as parking/security issues that the adjacent Verizon facility would like to see addressed. A summary of the public hearing, as well as copies of emails we received, are attached for your information.

SUMMARY

After several years of discussion we believe we have found the right site, at the right time, with the right community partner and the right community support. The Park Board unanimously urges the City Council to approve this proposal. Thank you.

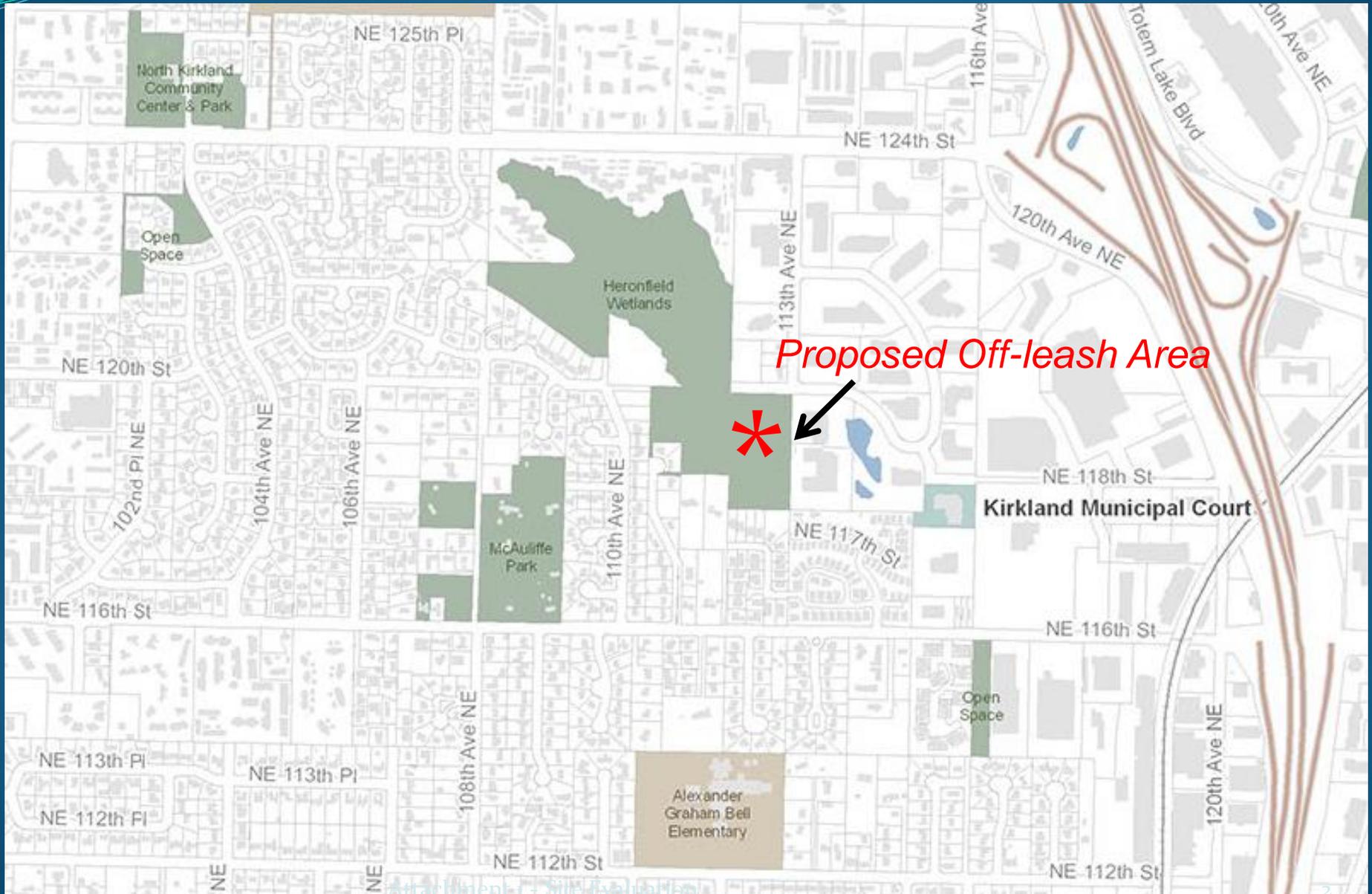
Attachments:

- 1 - Presentation Summary: Site Evaluation
- 2 - Presentation Summary: KDOG Organizational Background and Proposal
- 3 - Public Hearing Summary and Written Comments

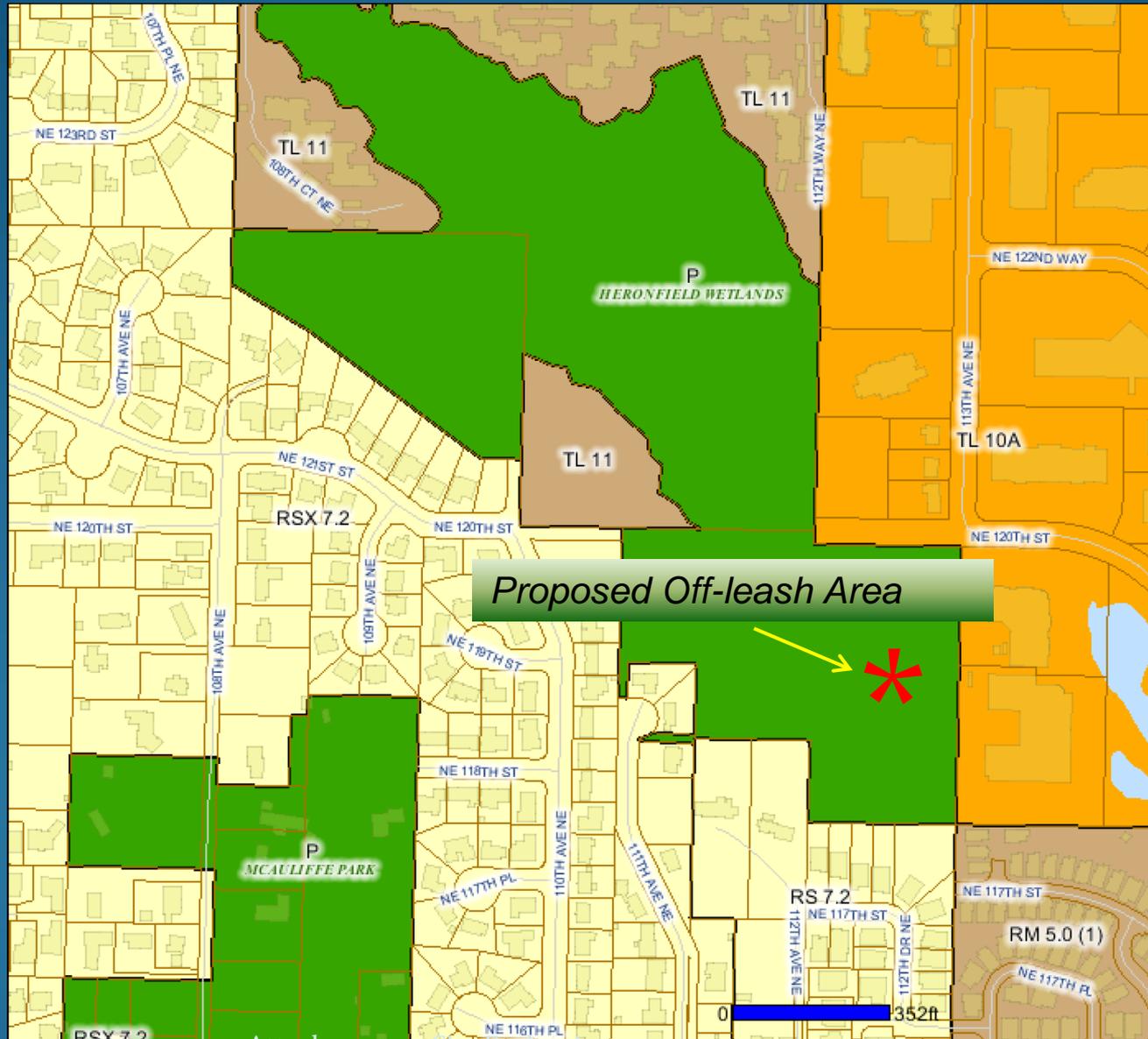
Site Evaluation Proposed Off-Leash Area

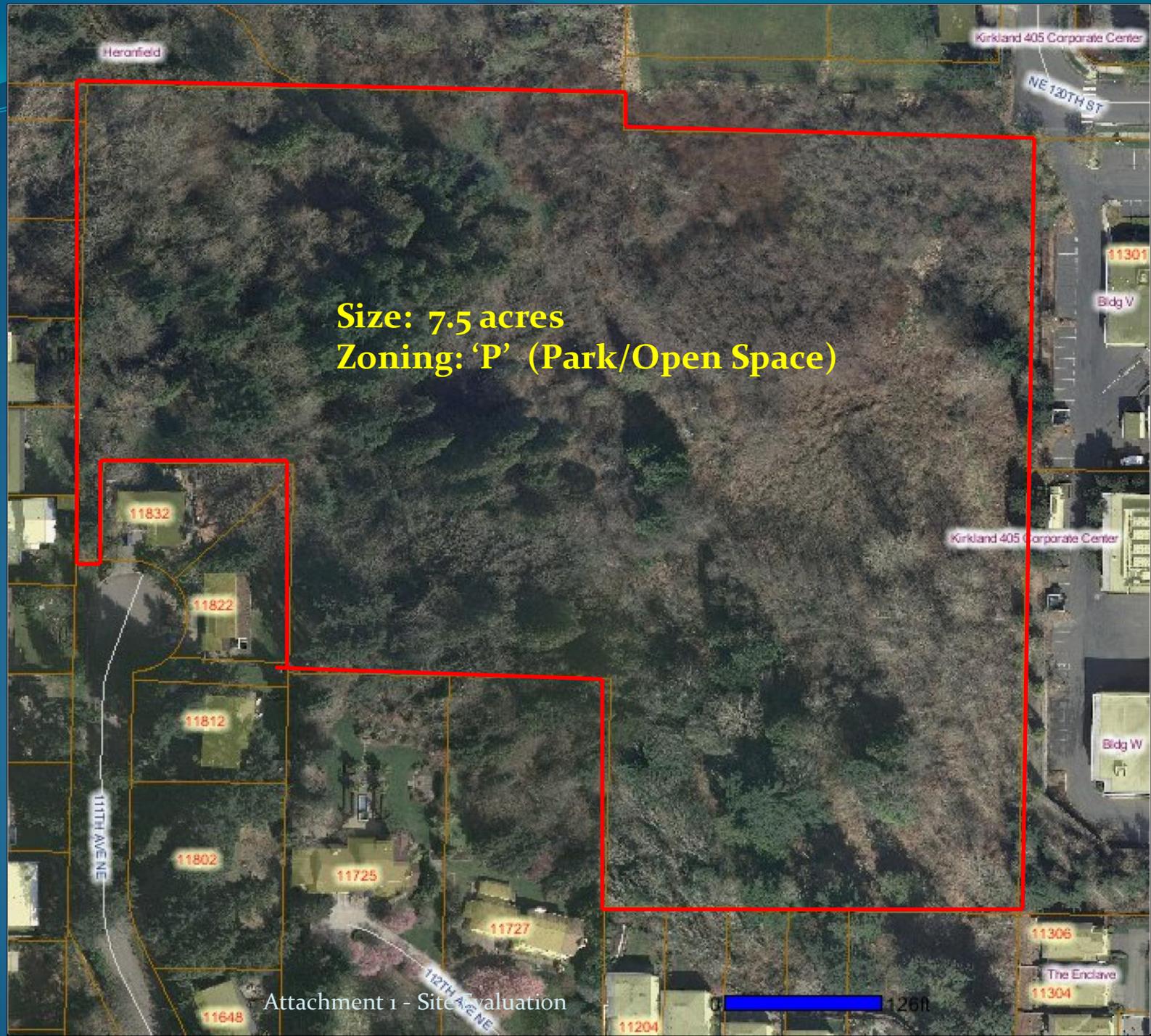
Park Board Recommendation, November 2010

Vicinity Map



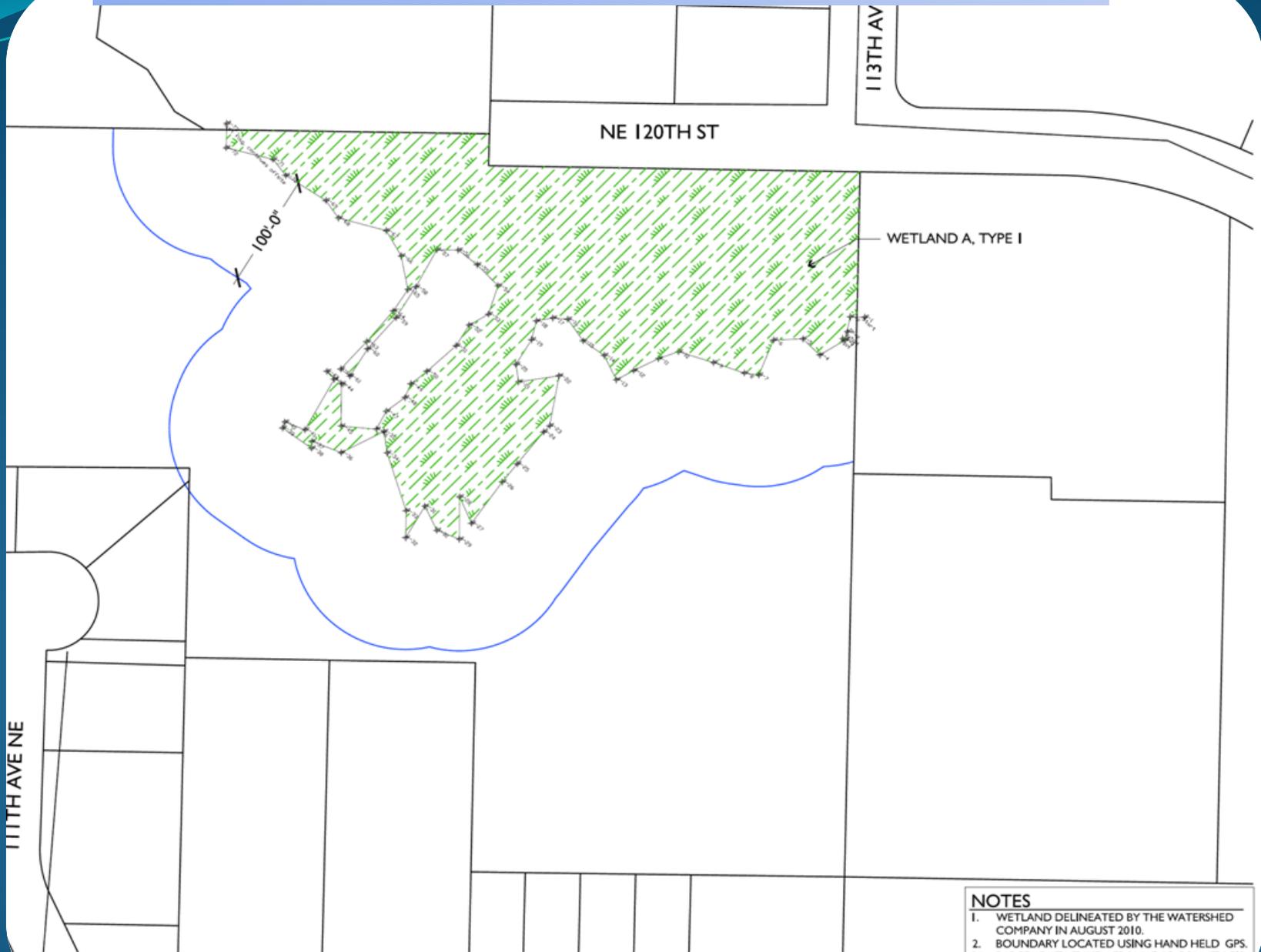
Land Use Map

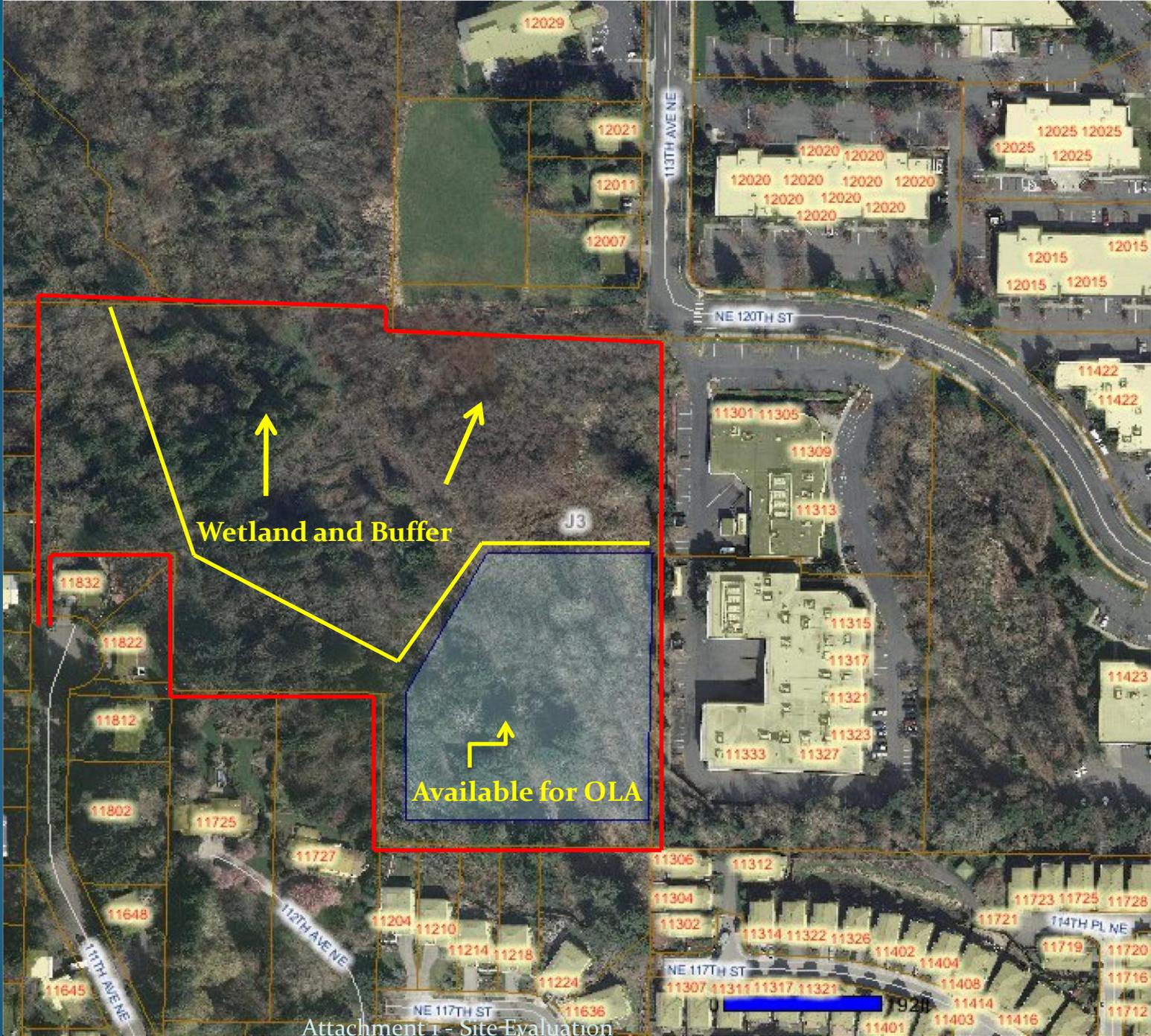




Size: 7.5 acres
Zoning: 'P' (Park/Open Space)

Location of Wetland and Buffer







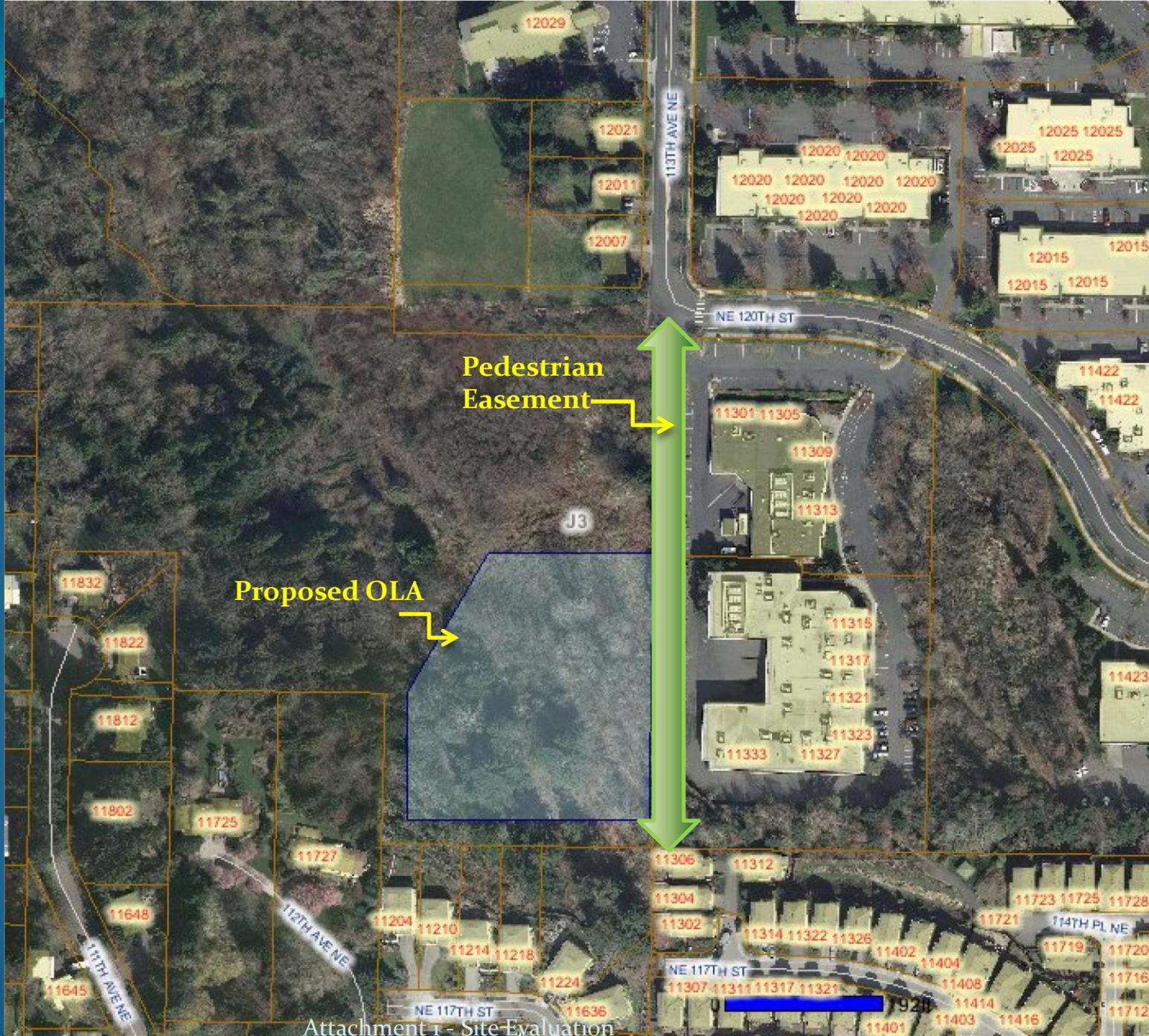




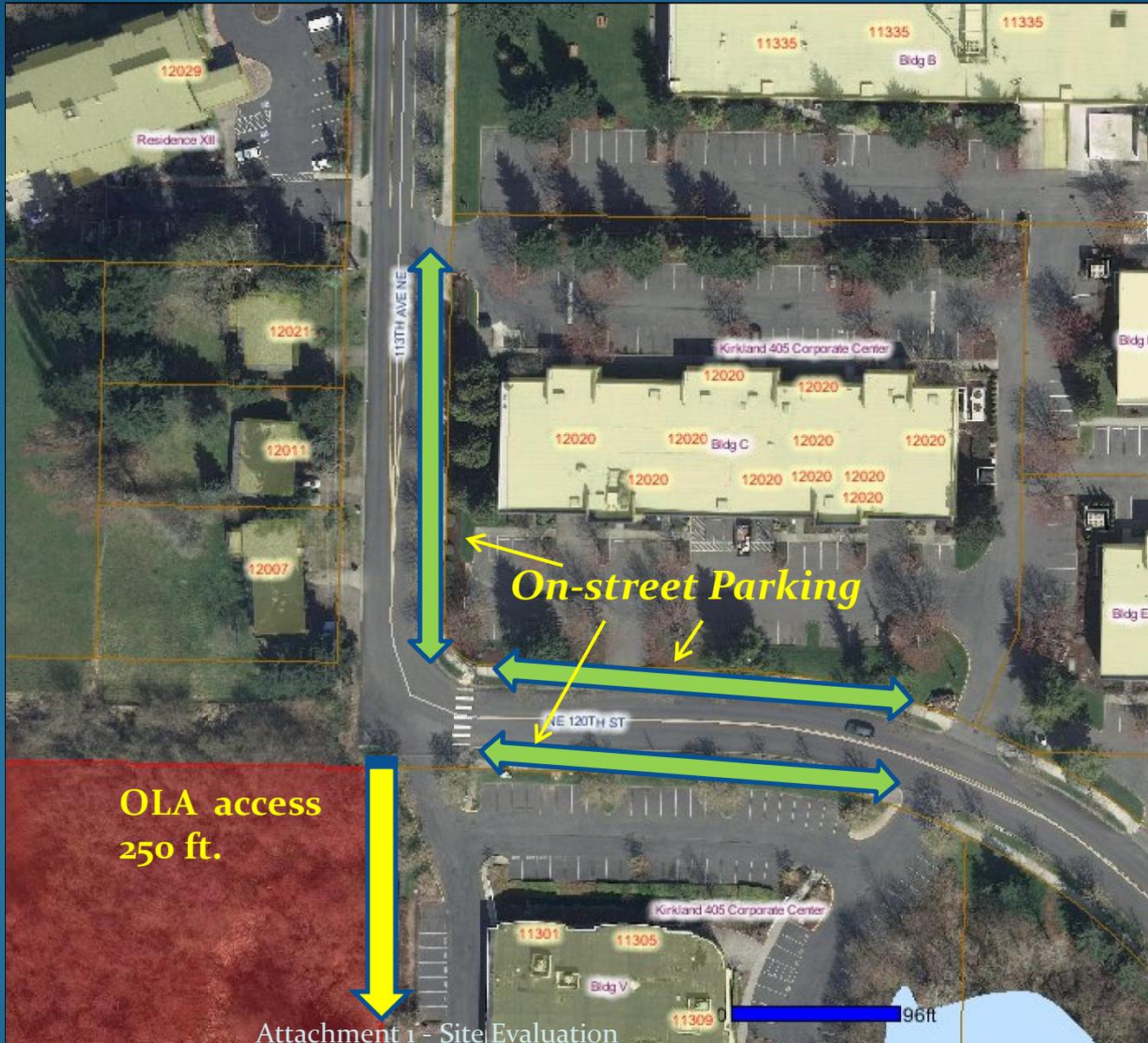


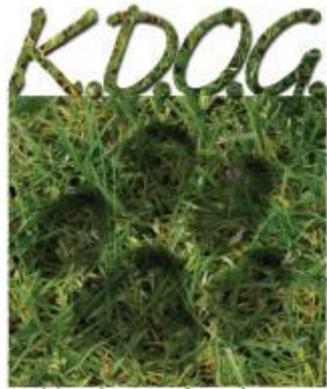
Neighborhood Walk Routes





On-Street Parking Availability





Kirkland Dog Off Leash Group

K-DOG Proposal for Kirkland Off Leash Area

Presented to: Park Board
October 13, 2010

Kirkland Off Leash Dog Group

Our goal since 2007 has been to:

- Work with the City of Kirkland to build safe legal places for dogs to play in Kirkland.
- Provide a manner to maintain the site.
- Educate dog owners about dog park etiquette to make the experience of going to a dog park fun and safe for dogs and their owners.

Short History of KDOG

- Kirkland Off Leash Dog group organized in 2007 to bring the need for off leash areas to the attention of the City.
- Registered as a non-profit corporation in WA state, elected board and officers in February 2008.
- Recognized by IRS, given 501(c)3 status March 2009.
- Created online petition with over 885 signatures.
- 244 members of our Meetup.com site.
- Go Dog Go event in Kirkland 2009 and 2010.
- Donated \$3000 to City in 2009 towards Parks.

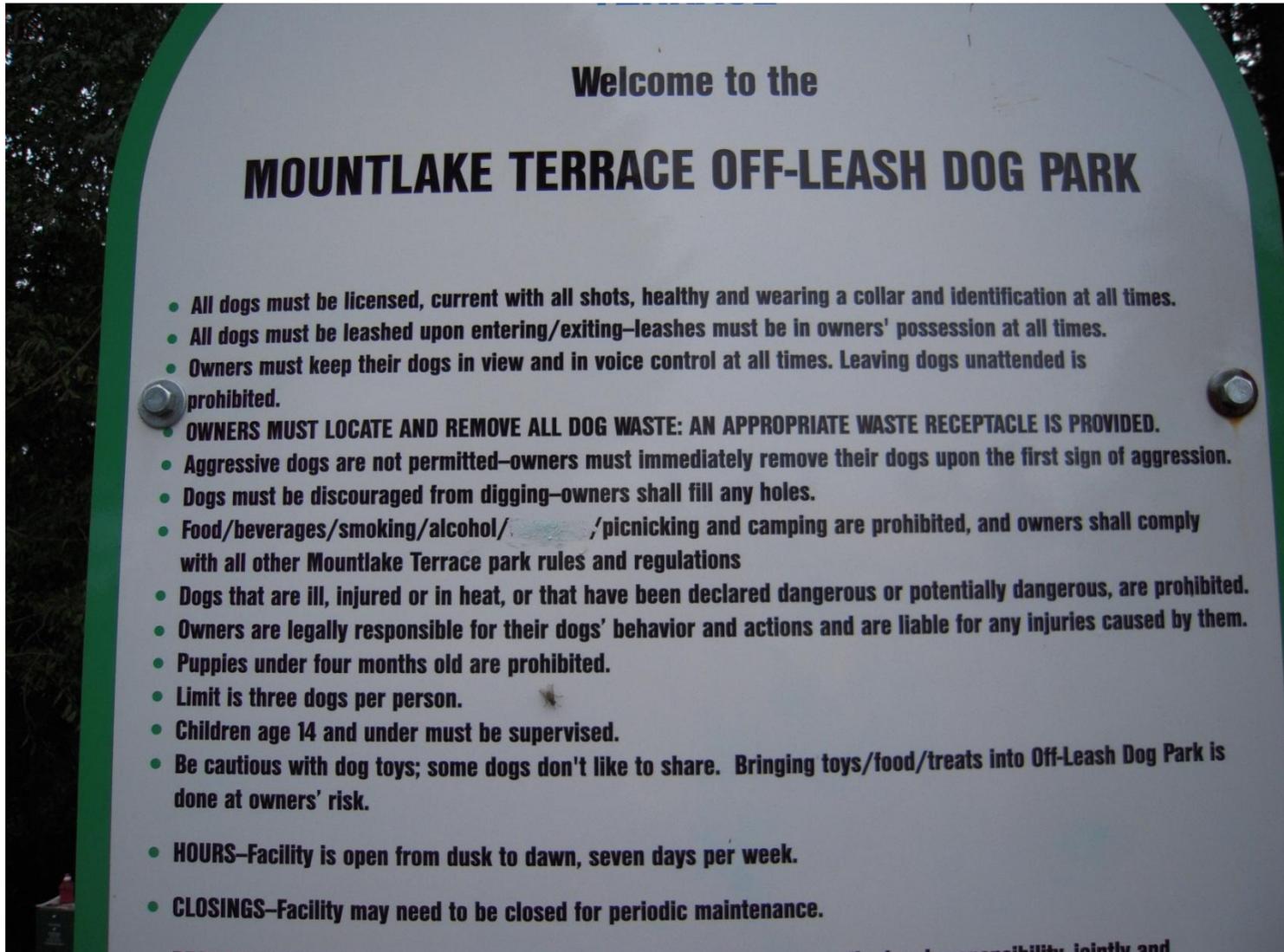
KODG Proposal : Street Parking



KDOG Proposal: Maintain Trees



KDOG Proposal: Do's and Don'ts



KDOG Proposal: Do's and Don'ts (cont.)



KDOG Proposal: 4 Foot High Fencing



KDOG Proposal : “Airlock” style gates



KDOG Proposal: Community Kiosk



KDOG Proposal: wood chip material and sand



KDOG Proposal: Waste Disposal Dumpster



KDOG Proposal: Recognition of Funders



KDOG Proposal: Donor Opportunities for Benches and other furniture in the OLA



KDOG Proposal: Educating Park Users

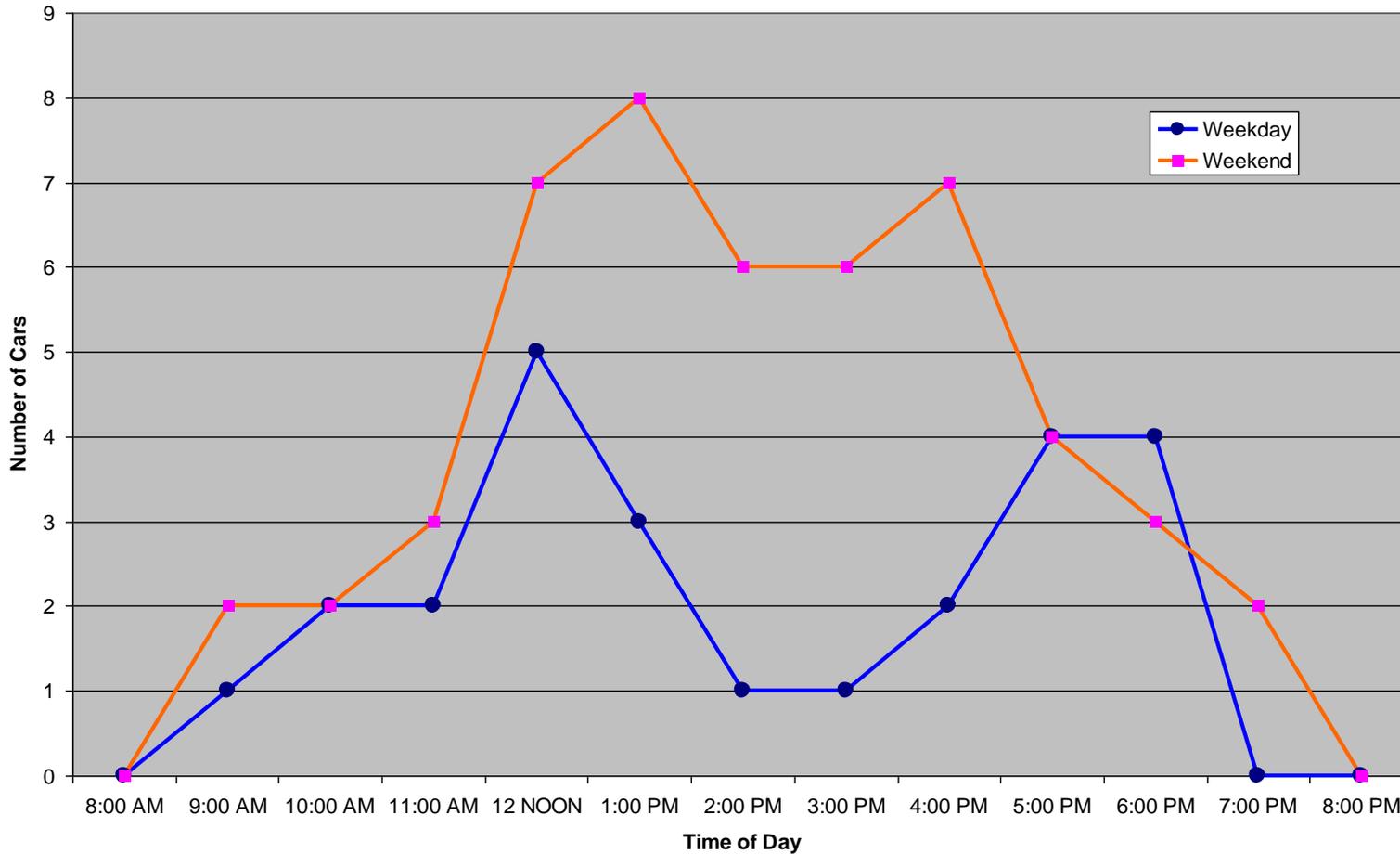


Basic Assumptions

- Park users have responsibility to demonstrate mutual respect and to abide by park rules.
- Park design to maximize users experience.
- KDOG to continuously educate park users.
- Dog owners maintain voice control over their dogs at all times.
- Average dog park visit maximum 45 minutes.
- Highest use will be on weekends, expect average 40 dogs week days and 85 dogs weekends, spread out over the day.

Anticipated Time of Day Usage

Anticipated Dog Park Use



Funding by KDOG

Estimated cost to build OLA:

- Wetland Delineation Study \$4,500 (completed)
- Site Construction \$25,000
- Poop Bags and Trash removal \$4,100 per year
- Signage, kiosk, gravel/wood chips/sand \$5,400
- Ongoing maintenance \$4,400 per year for 3 year starting balance

KDOG has raised over \$11,500 to date

KDOG Dedicated to a Safe Fun OLA

- K-Dog is committed to educate dog park users in expectations, rules, and dog socialization.
- Members are law abiding citizens who want to follow the rules.
- A few KDOG members are well respected dog trainers who have offered help.
- Excellent signage to adopt from existing parks.
- “User Handbook” from Sequim that we can adapt.
- K-Dog Website to provide articles, videos from local trainers on socialization skills for puppies and older dogs.

ATTACHMENT 4

PARK BOARD PUBLIC HEARING Off Leash Area Proposal October 13, 2010 Summary of Public Comments

Comments Received via Email:

Sandy Dain

Is supportive of a dog park provided there is strong community support, self-policing and an education program available for dog owners.

Heidi Hiatt

Glad Kirkland is considering a dog park and that expenses are being covered by a non-profit.

Suzanne Costa

Loves the idea of off leash parks and requests that the City consider dog-free areas in parks, such as picnic areas

Imelda Cheng

Kirkland resident who frequently travels to Marymoor Park in Redmond and 100% supports Kirkland having its own off-leash park. Suggests a nominal fee for use of the park.

Julie Barnett

The owner of a rescued greyhound supports development of a fenced off-leash area as greyhounds cannot be off leash in unfenced areas.

Nancy Bauchman

Feels Kirkland is in great need of a place to exercise pets and is volunteering to help maintain the dog park.

Anna Hersey

Doesn't think the City should spend any money in setting up an off-leash park and requests increased leash law enforcement in other City parks.

Louise Blain

Supports establishing an off-leash dog park in Kirkland and requests a secure area for small or timid dogs in addition to a larger off-leash area for bigger dogs.

John Porter

Is supportive of the proposed park site, but requests no use of taxpayer funding, prevention of access to the park from 111th Ave NE, limiting hours of park use to minimize noise disturbance to park neighbors, and prompt disposal of dog waste to prevent increase rat activity.

Richard Bready

Supports an off-leash dog park as a means of encouraging responsible pet ownership and recreation and provided a reminder that park costs will be paid by KDOG.

Karin Rosenberg

Supports an off-leash dog park in Kirkland and plans to use that park rather than Houghton and Terrace Parks.

Amy Introligator

Wrote in support of the proposed off-leash area and discusses steps she and KDOG have taken in gathering support from members and local businesses for the project.

Shinsuke Kano

Supports an off-leash dog park as an excellent addition to the community.

Danielle McClure

Supports the off-leash dog park as an opportunity for neighbors to meet other neighbors, especially new neighbors from the annexation area.

Lynda Haneman

President, Totem Lake Neighborhood Association, supports the proposed off-leash area.

Comments received in person at Hearing:

Greg Butler

Former chair of Juanita Neighborhoods Association, noted that dog park patrons support the local economy; healthy dogs make healthy dog owners; good for community.

Karen Patterson

Works at Verizon facility nearby, expressed concern about park users impeding access to local businesses and residences and about improper use of business-owned utilizing dumpsters.

Jim Ito

President of Mountlake Terrace Dog Off-leash Group (MLTDOG). Shared information about the community's positive reception of the MLT dog park.

Terri Fletcher

Shared a letter by a business volunteering labor and some materials for the park construction.

Bonnie McLeod

"It's time for Kirkland to do the right thing and get a dog park."

Graham Comely

Drives to Bellevue, Passionate, ready to get going. Talked about area being safer, cleaner with the addition of dog park; ready to volunteer to build and maintain the dog park.

Park Board Public Hearing on Off Leash Area Proposal
October 13, 2010
Summary of Comments Received

Tracy Doering

Vowed commitment on the part of KDOG to make this park happen. Encourages the Board to move forward.

John Sheldon

An opportunity to maintain "horizontal nature" of the City; and great opportunity to serve citizens of the City. Shared concerns about parking and access.

Marley Olsen

Youth Council member. Shared the importance to the youth community to have a local place for youth to take their dogs. Also beneficial in preventing unwanted off-leash activity in other parks.

Jim McCutchen

Veterinarian whose clinic is located near proposed site and in favor of dog park.

- End -