

# Off-Leash Area Expansion Study

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## 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.

**2017 “People, Dogs, and Parks Plan”**

- Public Outreach happened in 2016/17
- Plan focused primarily on maintenance recommendations of existing system and less on future expansion

**Off-Leash Area Expansion Study**

- Approx. 30 sites been studied for suitability relative to the Site Selection Criteria. This study will establish a list of “Preferred Sites”.

**Initial 1997 Pilot**

- 8 sites included, 7 sites became permanent after 18-month trial period that began in 1997

**“One-Off” Off-Leash Area Development**

- 6 new sites added on case-by-case basis
- Following this phase, all City Council Districts had at least 1 Off-Leash

**CIP-Planned Off-Leash Areas**

- Off-Leash Areas have been included into certain CIP projects where possible

**MPD Implementation**

- Public Outreach, Planning, Design, Bidding, and Construction of 2 sites will come next. Planning for 3rd will happen concurrently



Initial Pilot Program

1. Blue Dog Pond (SPU owned, Parks Maintained), 2. Genesee Park, 3. Golden Gardens, 4. Magnuson Park, 5. Northacres Park, 6. Wescrest Park, 7. Woodland Park, 8. Dr. Jose Rizal Park, 9. Volunteer Park (removed)

1. I-5 Colonnade, 2. Plymouth Pillars, 3. Regrade, 4. Denny, 5. Magnolia Manor, 6. Kinnear

Smith Cove (Planned), South Park Community Center (Planned), Georgetown Flume (Planned), Denny Substation (Built - SCL Facility)

2 New Off-Leash to be Constructed (1 in West Seattle, 1 TBD), 1 Additional Off-Leash Planned for Construction + a list of sites feasible for future Off-Leash development.



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

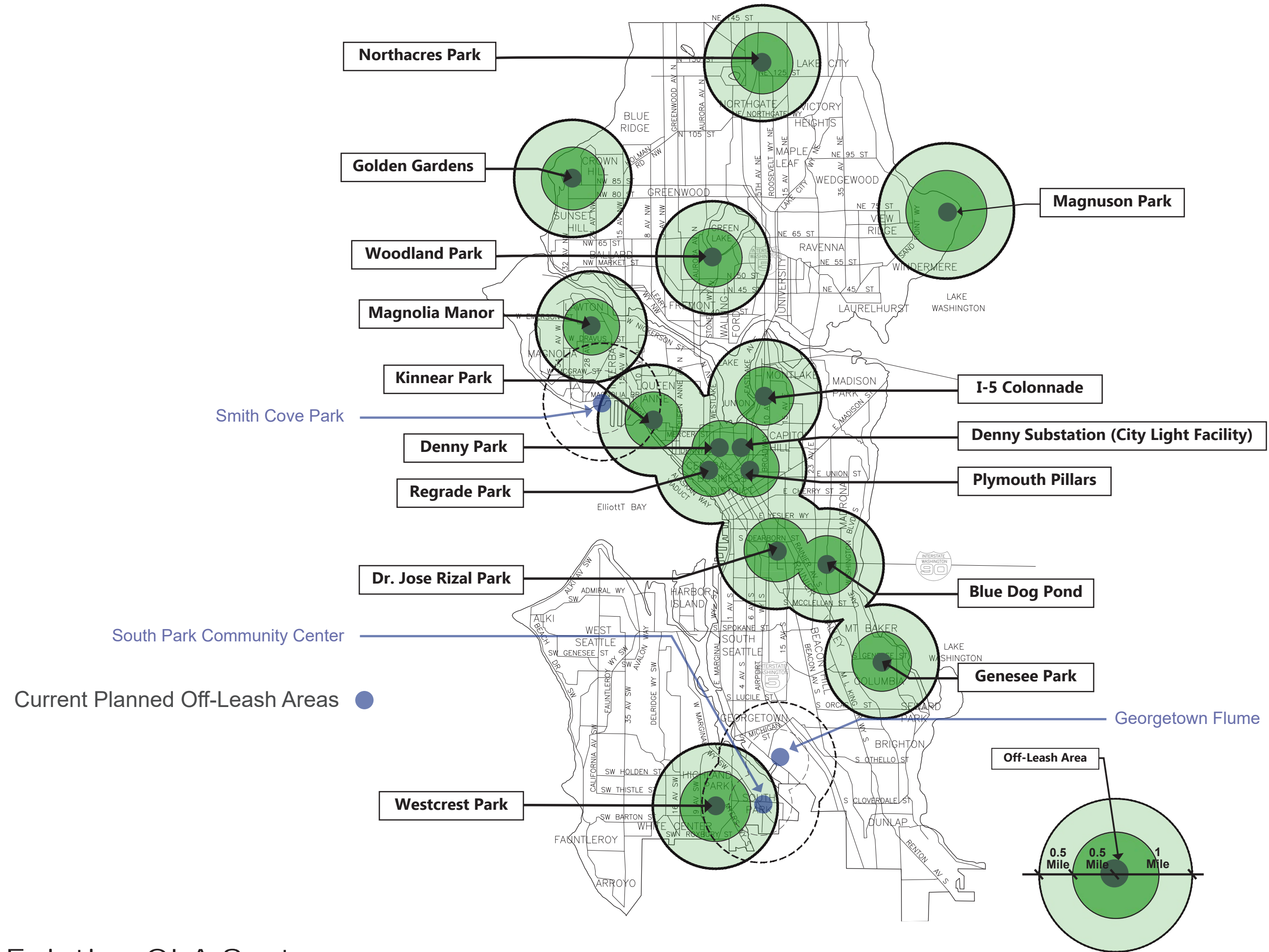
It was the hope of city officials that violations of the leash, license and scoop laws would drop with the advent of off-leash areas, but that was not the case. About 26 percent of Seattle dog owners admit to exercising their dogs illegally in non-off leash areas in ballfields, tennis courts, play areas, 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**

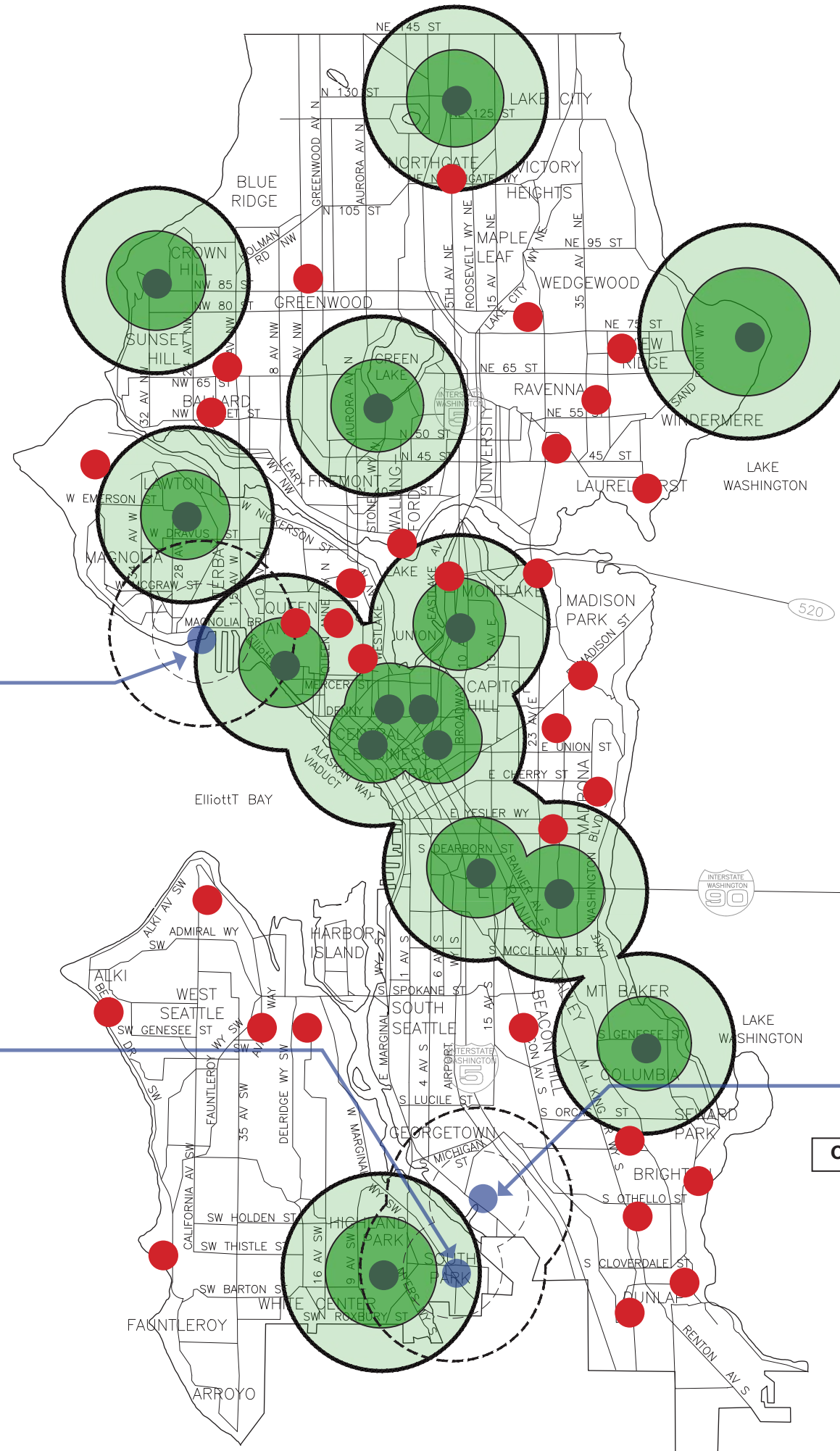
- Washington Park Playfield
- Homer Harris Park
- Rogers Playground
- Powell Barnett Park
- Montlake Community Center
- Dr. Blanche Lavizzo Park

**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



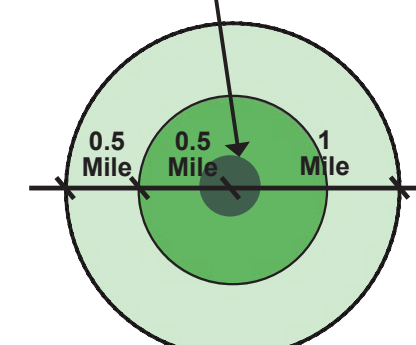
Potential Sites for Future Off-Leash Area Development



Existing Off-Leash Area



Off-Leash Area



Existing OLAs, Planned OLAs, Studied OLAs

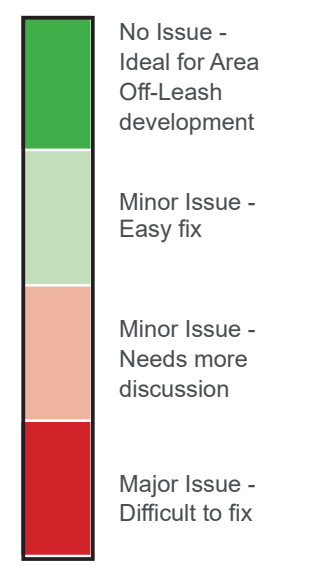
This matrix provides an assessment of each site according to the Site Selection Criteria.

	West Seattle					Central West Seattle					North West Seattle				North East Seattle					Central East Seattle					South East Seattle								
	Lincoln Park	Hamilton Viewpoint	West Seattle Stadium	Delridge CC	Me-Kwa-Mooks Park	Bhy Kracke Park	Mayfair Park	East Queen Anne PG	West Queen Anne PG	Discovery Park	Sandel Park	Gasworks Park	Salmon Bay Park	Ballard Commons	Laurelhurst CC	Ravenna Park	View Ridge Playfield	Bryant Park	Dahl Playfield	Hubbard Homestead	Washington Park PF	Homer Harris Park	Rogers Playground	Powell Barnett Park	Montlake CC	Dr. Blanche Lavizzo Park	Rainier Beach CC	Othello Park	Benefit Playground	Martha Washington Park	Jefferson Park	Brighton Playfield	
Cannot conflict with existing park uses in a way that creates safety issues	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Orange	Red	Green	Orange	Green	Orange	Green	
Cannot be located in a park that is a designated Seattle landmark	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	
No ECA's, natural areas	Green	Red	Light Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Light Green	Green	Green	
Must have preliminary approval from the site owner, if not on Parks land	Green	Green	Orange	Light Green	Green	Green	Green	Light Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Light Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green

**Other Considerations:**

Geographic Need	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Light Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Light Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	
Accessible (or a plan must be created to make it Accessible)	Light Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Light Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Light Green	Orange	Light Green	Green	Orange	Orange	Light Green	
No significant vegetation	Light Green	Green	Light Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Light Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Light Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Light Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Light Green	
At least 50 ft. away from other property lines	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Light Green	Light Green	Green	Green	Red	Orange	Light Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Light Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	
Flat site	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Light Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Light Green	Light Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	
Access to parking spots or accessibility by public transportation	Light Green	Green	Light Green	Light Green	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Orange	Green	Orange	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green	Orange	Orange	Light Green	Light Green	Green	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Light Green	Red	Orange	Light Green	Orange	Light Green	Light Green	
High visibility into the site	Light Green	Green	Light Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Light Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Light Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Light Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Light Green	Green

**Legend:**



Studied Sites



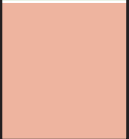


Using the Site Selection Criteria, we narrowed the list of 32 sites down to 9 “Preferred Sites”

**West Seattle**  
(Must get Off-Leash per MPD)

	Lincoln Park	West Seattle Stadium	East Queen Anne PG	Discovery Park	Ravenna Park	View Ridge Playfield	Powell Barnett Park	Othello Park	Brighton Playfield
<b>Site Selection Criteria:</b>									
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

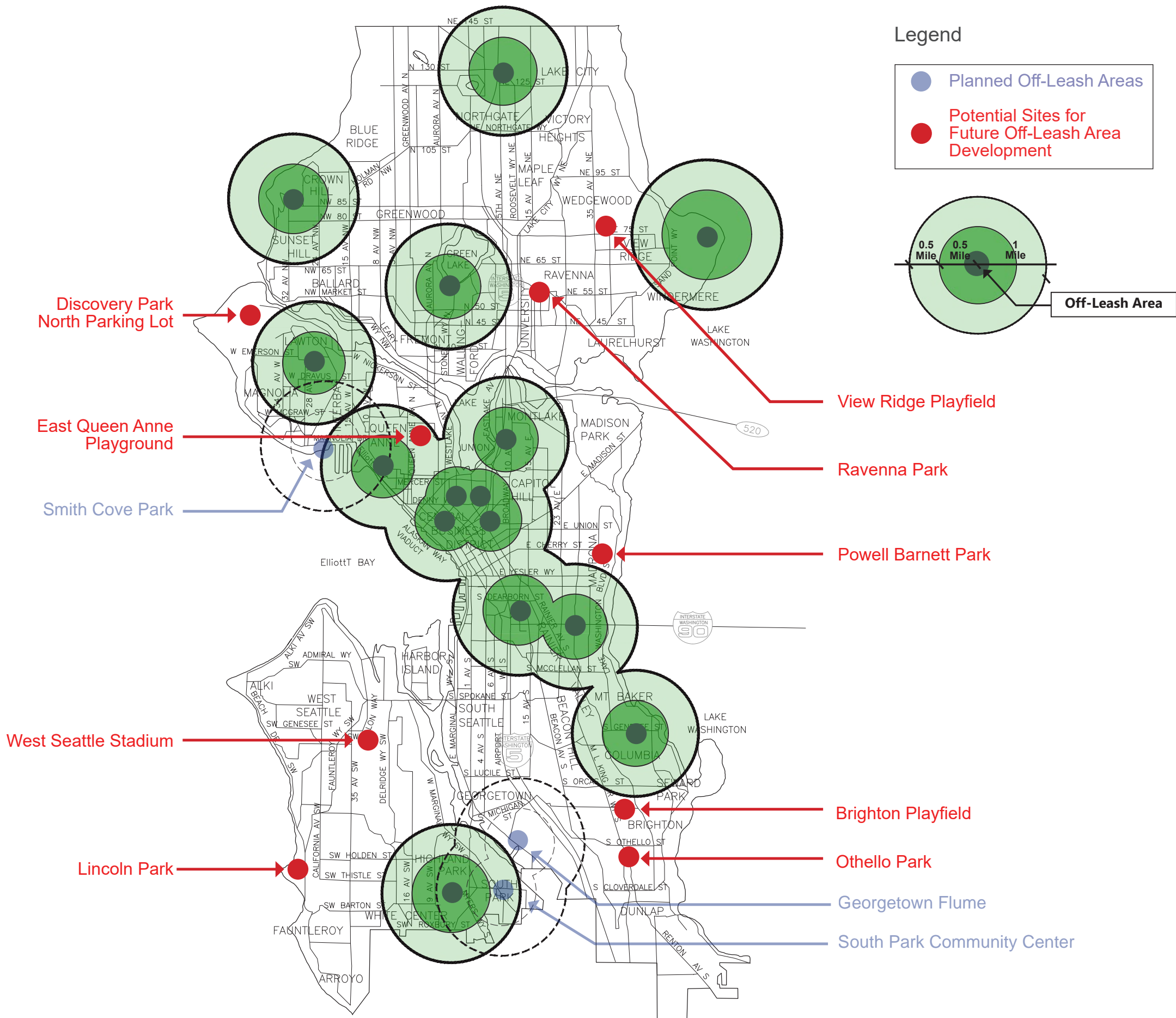
**Legend:**

-  No Issue - Ideal for Off-Leash Area Development
-  Minor Issue - Easy fix
-  Bigger Issue - Needs more discussion

	Lincoln Park	West Seattle Stadium	East Queen Anne PG	Discovery Park	Ravenna Park	View Ridge Playfield	Powell Barnett Park	Othello Park	Brighton Playfield
<b>Other Considerations:</b>									
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

Preferred Sites

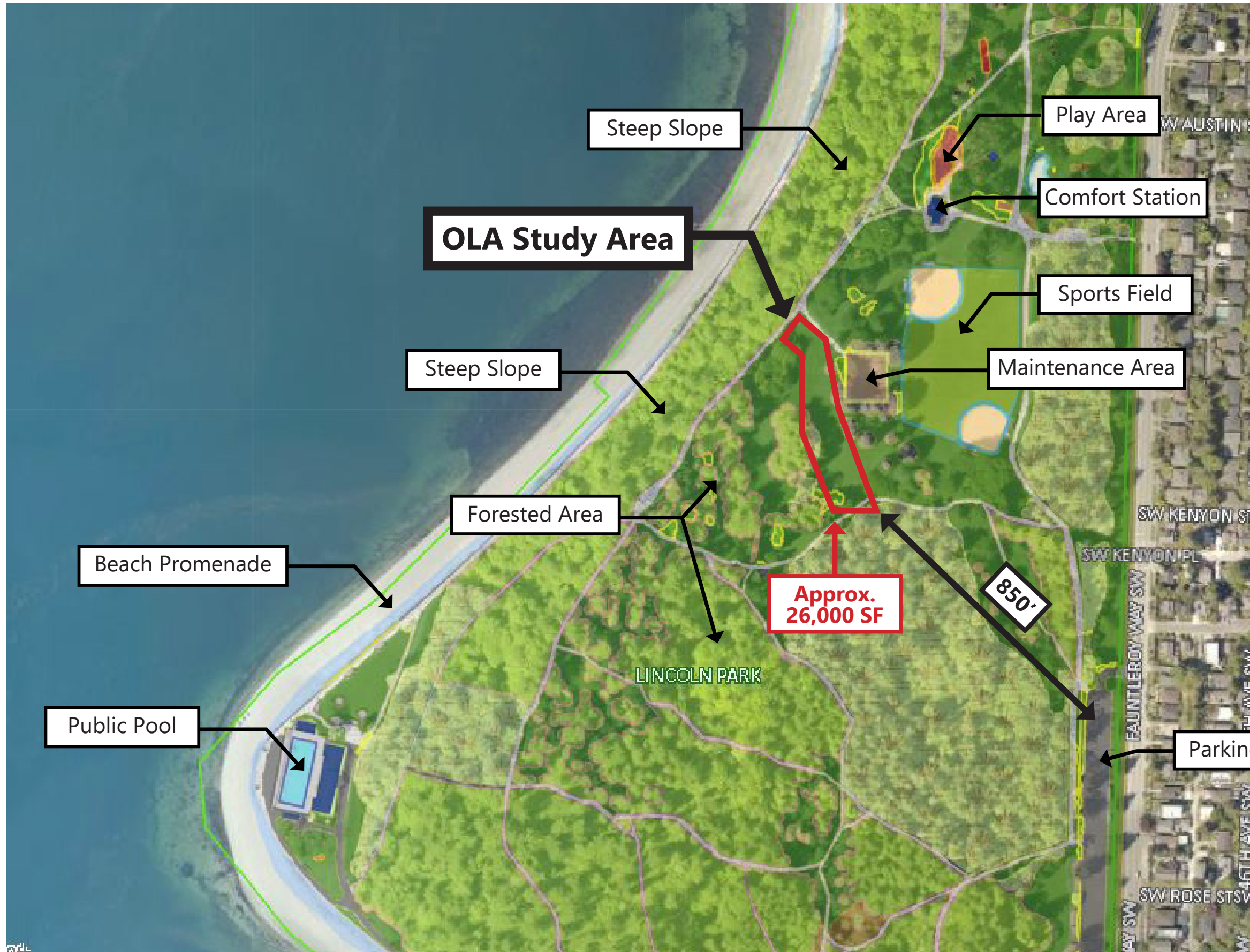




Existing OLAs, Planned OLAs, Preferred Sites



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

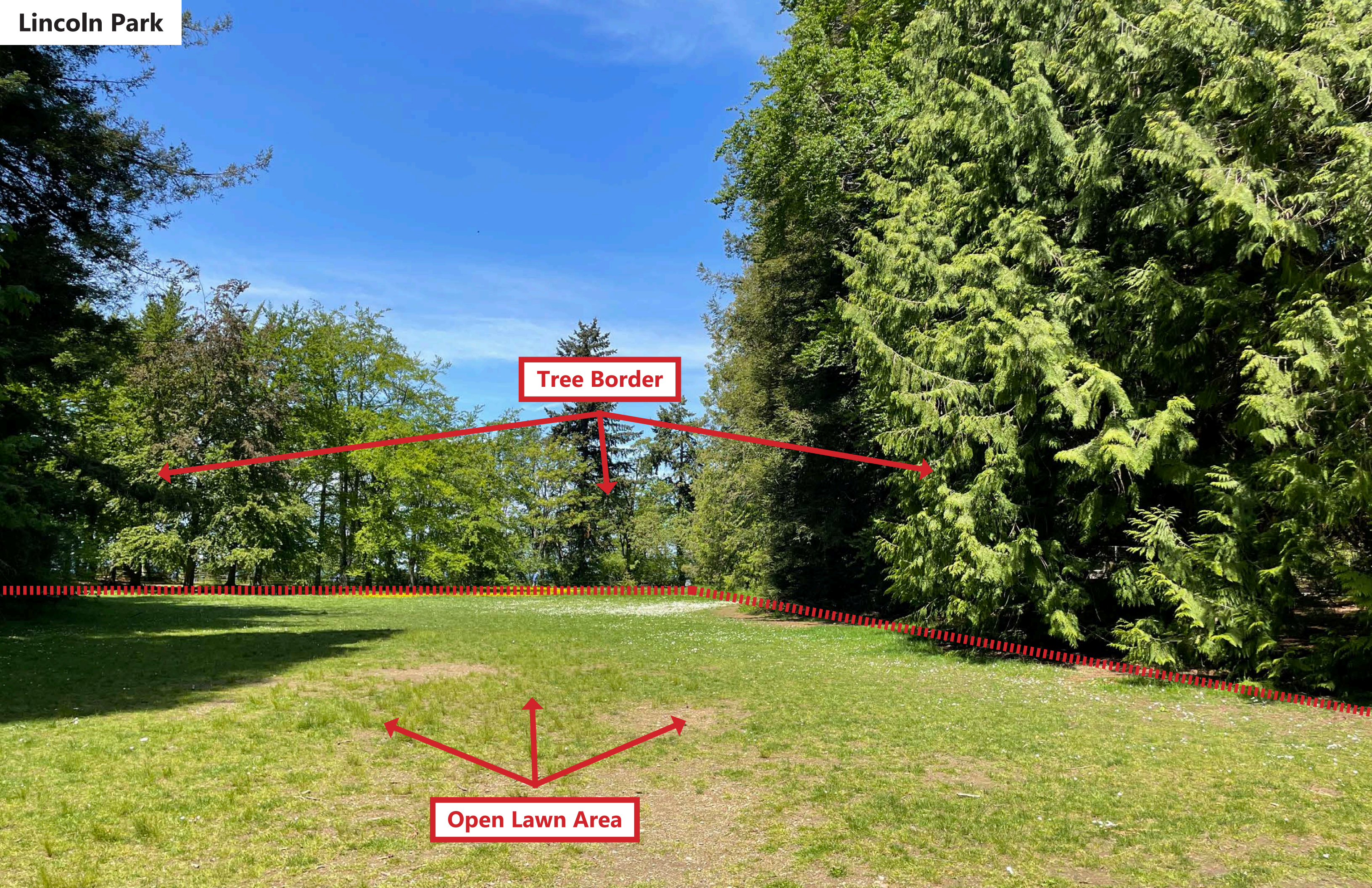


### Due Diligence Findings:

- 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







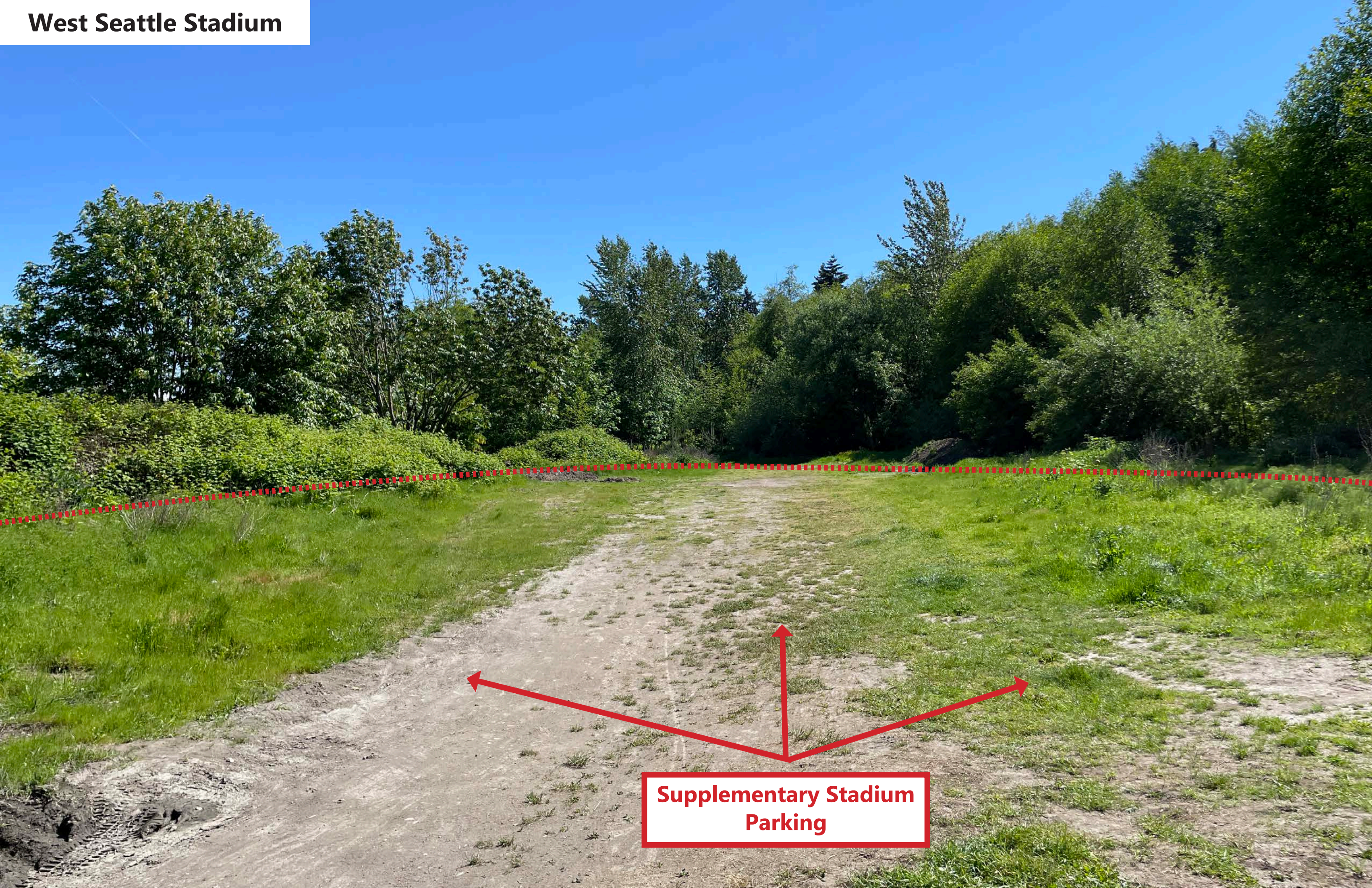
**Due Diligence Findings:**

- 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**

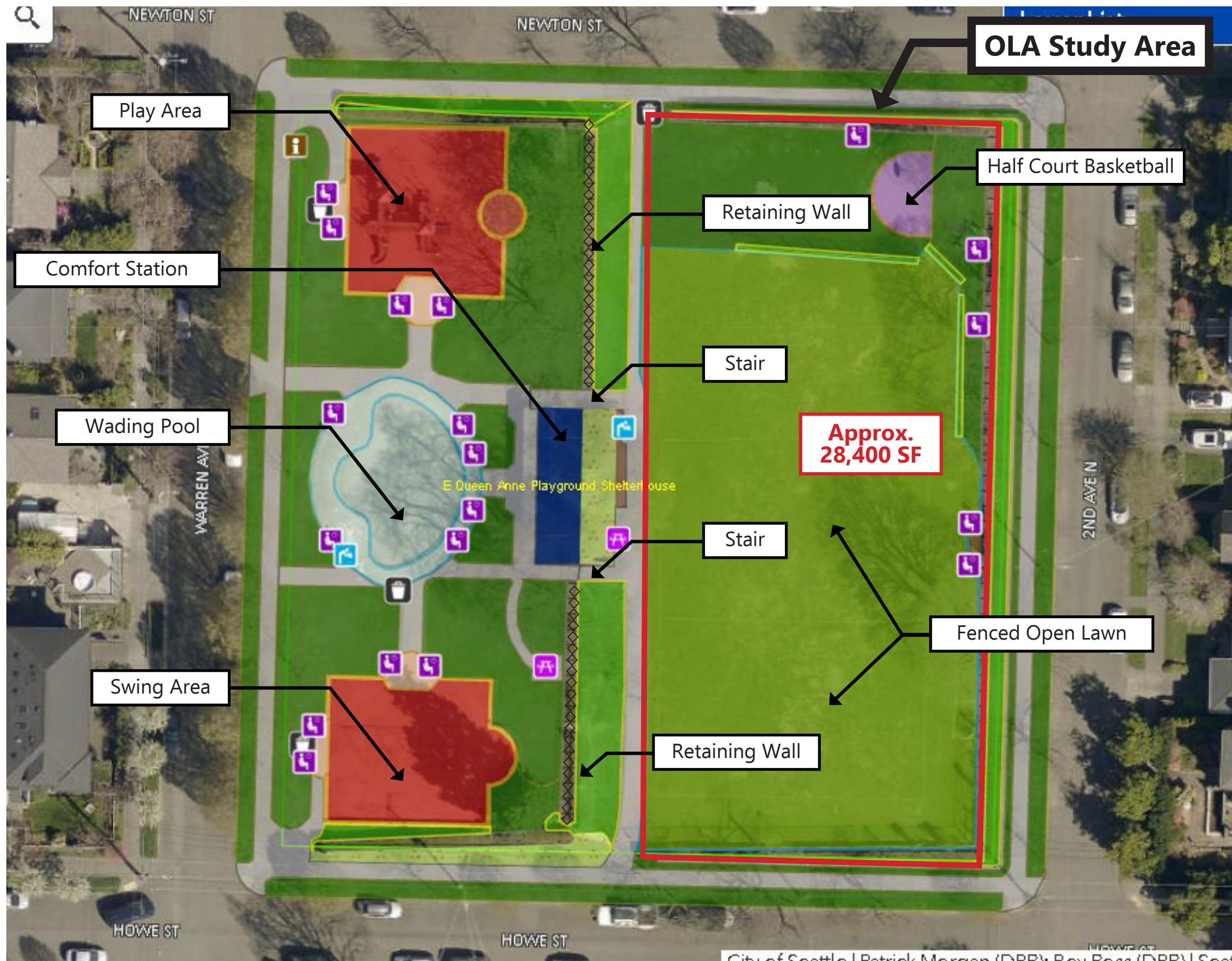


# West Seattle Stadium



**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.

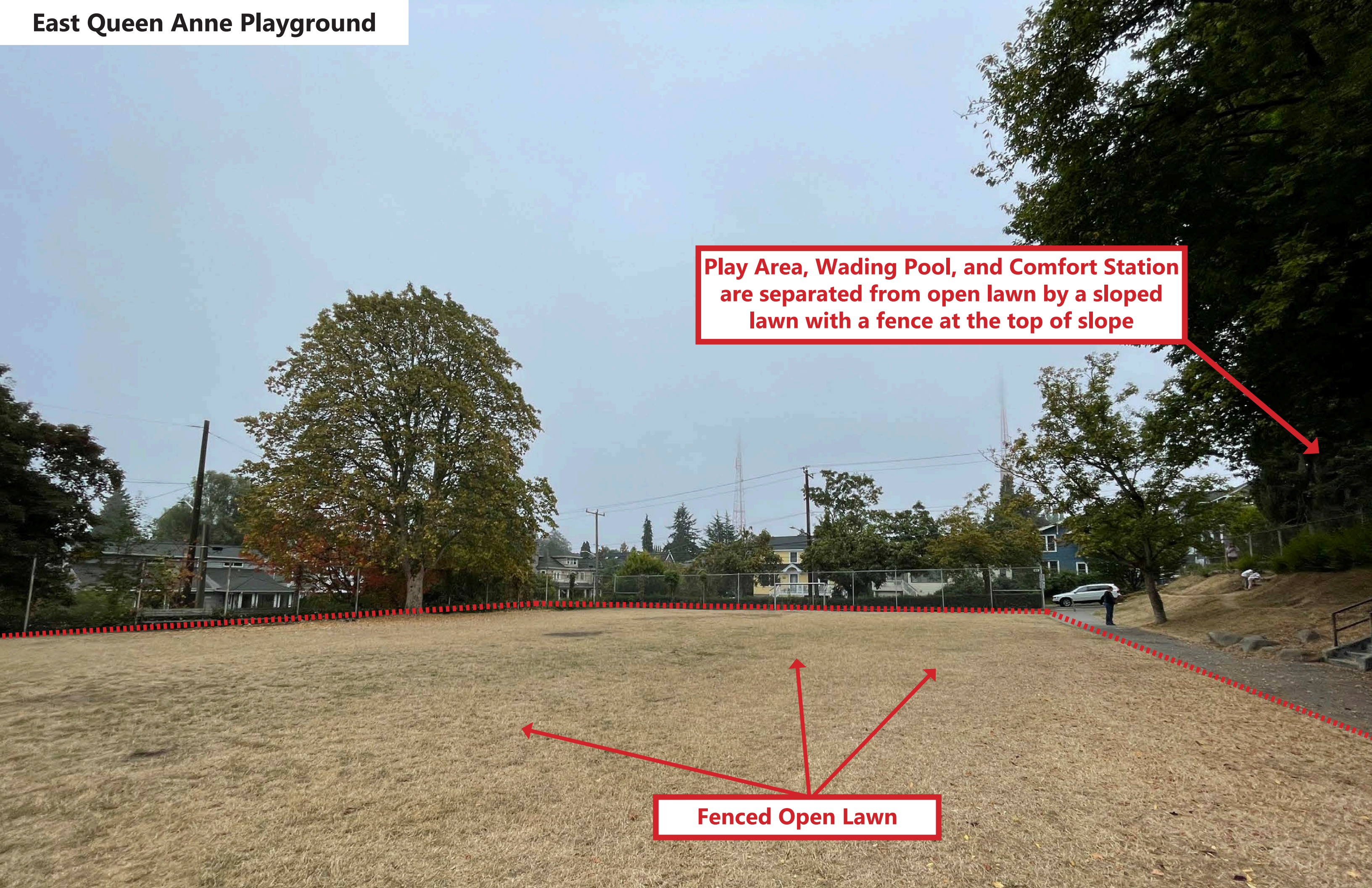
## East Queen Anne Playground - Adjacent Uses



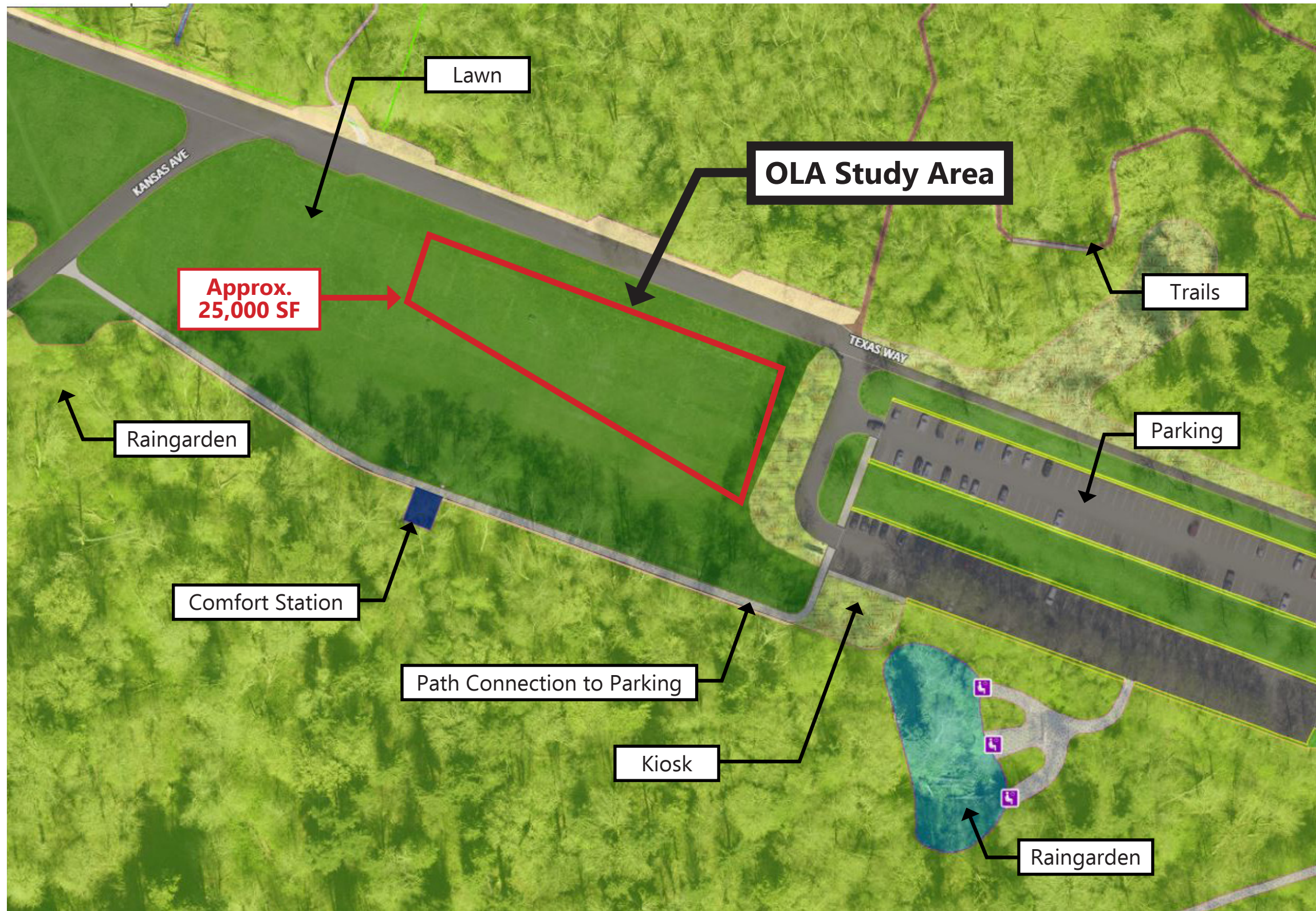
# East Queen Anne Playground

**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.

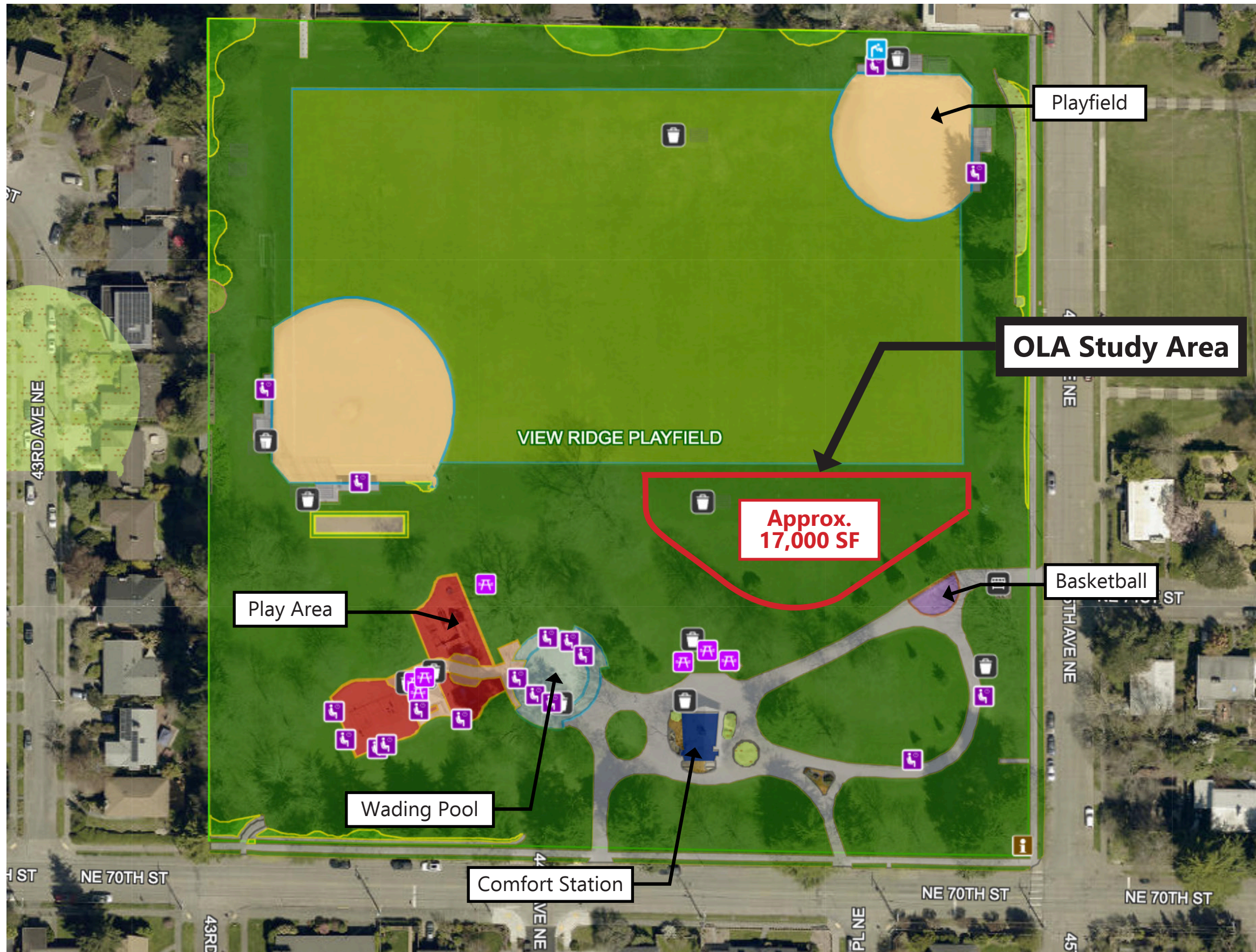
**Ravenna Park - Adjacent Uses**





**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**

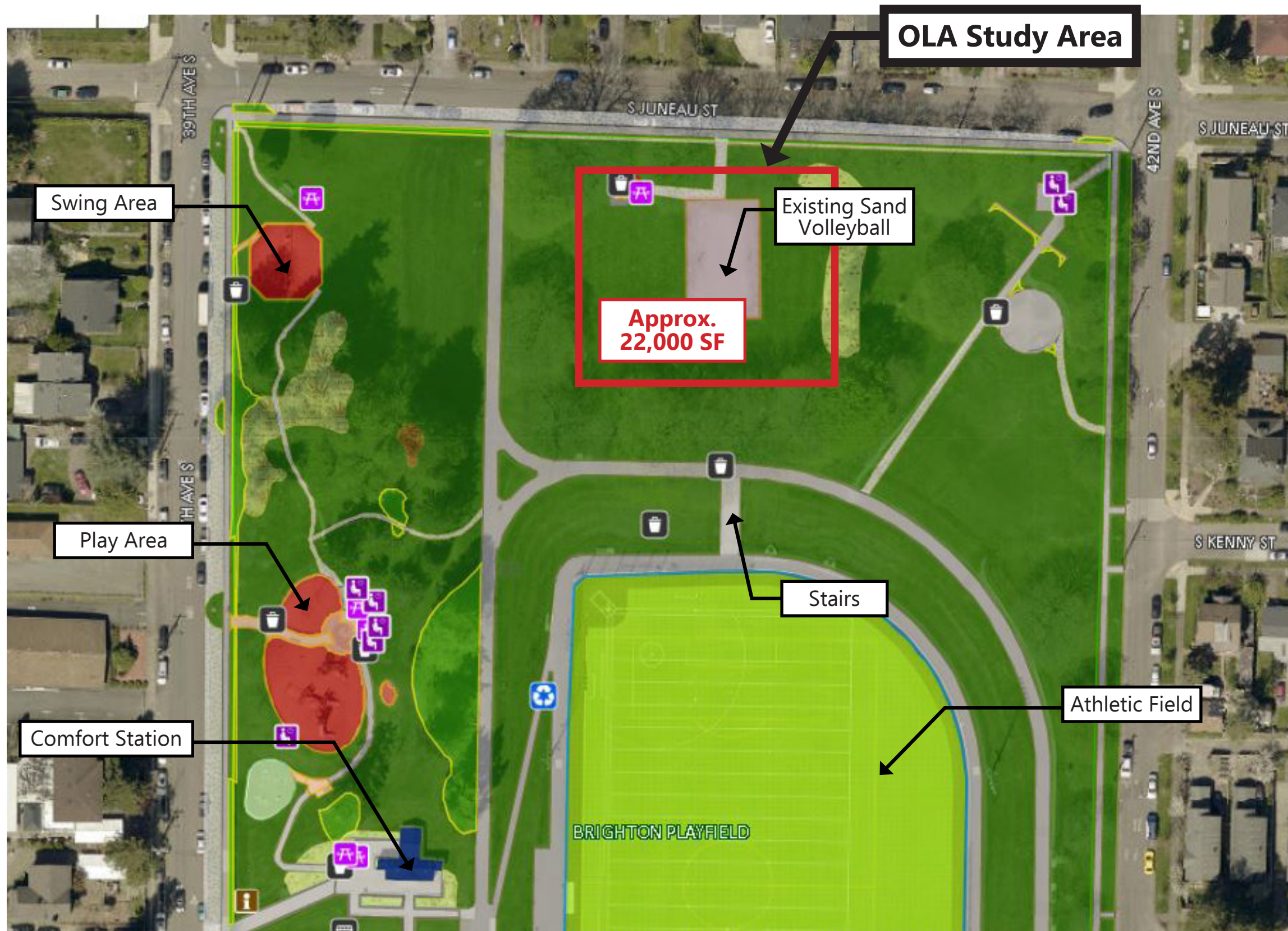


# Othello Playground

**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**



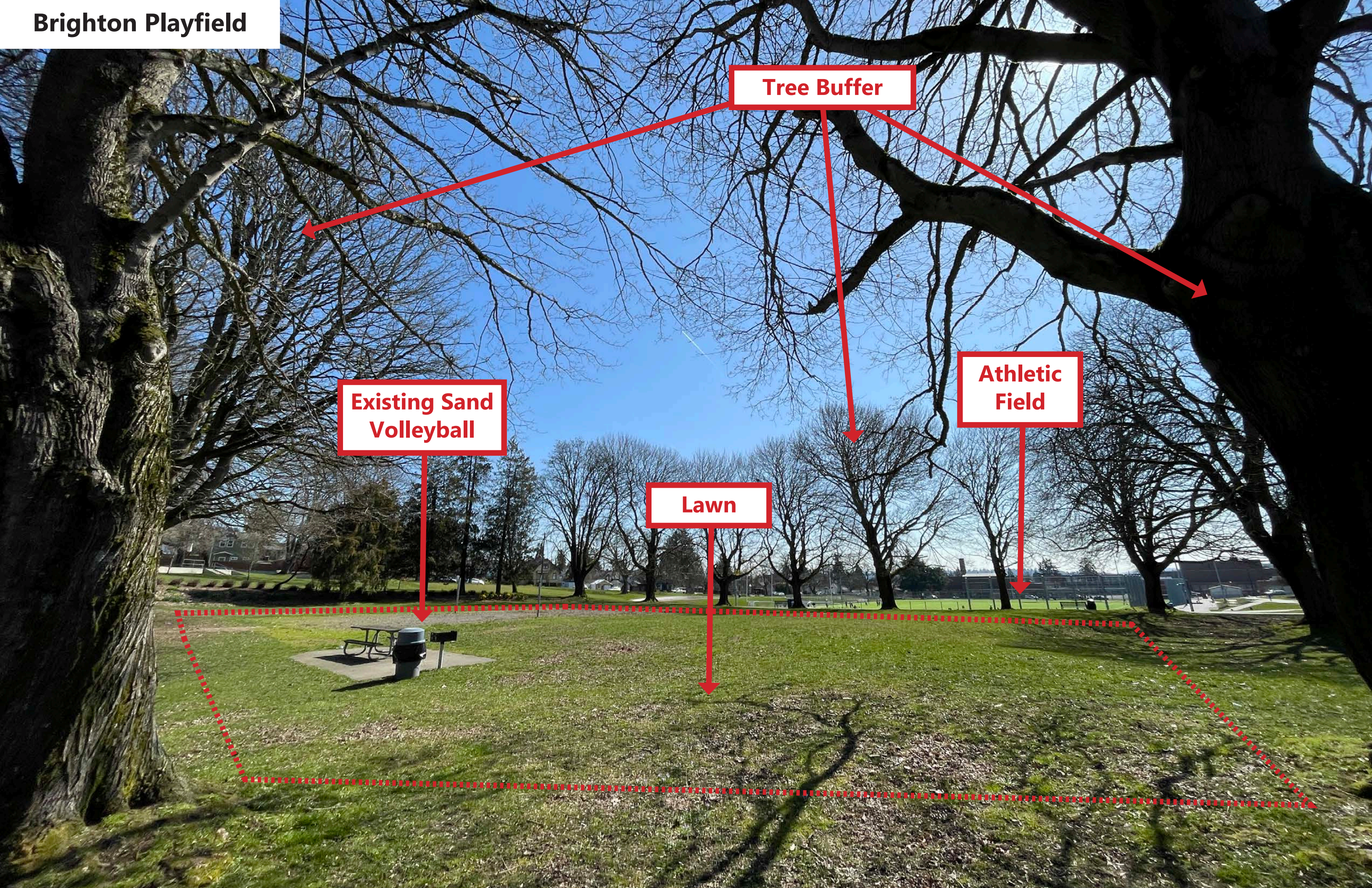
**Brighton Playfield**

**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