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An Inquiry into Portland's Canine Quandary: Recommendations for a Citywide Off-leash Program

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An Inquiry into Portland's Canine Quandary

Recommendations for a Citywide Off-leash Program



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Master of Urban and Regional Planning
Portland State University
June 2003

**An Inquiry into Portland's Canine Quandary:
Recommendations for a Citywide
Off-leash Program**

**Prepared for:
Citizens for Safe Parks with Off-leash Territory
(C-SPOT)**

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**Planning Workshop
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The Portland State University Master of Urban and Regional Planning Program and the Planning Workshop:

The Master of Urban and Regional Planning program at Portland State University provides practicing and aspiring planners with knowledge of history, practice, methodology and a consideration of ethical responsibility surrounding the planning profession. The Planning Workshop is the culmination of the Masters Program and it allows students the opportunity to put their knowledge and skills into practice.

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I. Introduction

The City of Portland currently faces a difficult challenge. As the population continues to grow, greater pressure is placed upon the limited amount of public open space available for recreation. As stated in the Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) 2020 Vision Plan, "Demographic, recreational, and funding trends suggest that both current shortages and future needs will intensify and produce inequities in our cherished park system" (PP&R, 2001).

Today, Portland's already strained park system struggles to accommodate demands for the myriad of recreational activities. Competition among park users – joggers, tennis players, picnickers, dog owners, bicyclists, and others – for limited resources will only intensify leading to a greater number conflicts in Portland parks.

According to PP&R, the most common complaints they hear are dog related: dogs illegally off-leash, unwanted contact with off-leash dogs, and dog waste (Brenes, 2/28/03). Currently, Portland has four areas in the city that are designated for off-leash activity, but, for a variety of reasons, these sites are not adequate to meet the needs of dog owners. PP&R's 2020 Vision Plan asserts, "Over 40% of city residents own dogs and the need for places to let them play is growing" (PP&R, 2001).

Numerous community organizations and citizens have articulated the need for additional designated off-leash areas (OLAs) in Portland, and several reports and studies have conveyed this need and assessed the various social and environmental impacts of off-leash dogs in the city. Additionally, a number of stakeholders have shown support for designated recreation areas for off-leash activity, including advocacy groups, members of the dog owning public, and many Portland neighborhood coalitions.

PP&R is also a key stakeholder, as they are charged with ensuring access to adequate, safe and enjoyable recreation opportunities for Portland's citizens. Other stakeholders to consider are Multnomah County Animal Control and the Audubon Society. Currently, the process for implementing OLAs seems stalled, as new OLAs have not been sited since 2001 and may not be for many more years to come.

In the past, several reports have made recommendations regarding off-leash activity in Portland (see Appendix A). The primary objective of this document is to add new insight to the problem by gathering and analyzing relevant data, and to offer recommendations to improve and expedite the implementation of OLAs in Portland.

The case studies conducted for the project yielded valuable information about what other cities have done to implement successful off-leash programs. The fieldwork also produced many interesting findings regarding the needs and opinions of park users. Based upon this work, a set of final recommendations has been formulated that we hope will be given serious consideration by all of the stakeholders.

II. Background information

A. What is an Off-leash Area (OLA)?

Under Multnomah County Code Chapter 13, Animal Control, dogs must remain on leash in all public places and parks, except in designated OLAs. These areas are parcels of land set aside specifically for dog owners to bring their dogs to exercise and socialize off-leash. Currently, there are four designated OLAs in Portland.

Two of Portland's OLAs are fenced areas designated for the single purpose of off-leash activity. OLAs compete for park space with other activities, such as tennis, baseball, skateboarding, and basketball, and require capital investments for the fencing and other amenities including water, benches, scoop bags, garbage cans, and signs.

Unfenced OLAs are generally multi-use areas; that is, they share the space with other uses such as overflow parking, baseball, or soccer. In many cases, designated off-leash hours (OLH) are associated with multi-use OLAs to minimize conflicts between uses. During the designated OLHs, dog owners are allowed to recreate with their dogs off-leash, while the other activities are prohibited. The OLH strategy requires minimal capital investment. In Portland, there are two unfenced OLAs, and one that is a multi-use area. Currently, no parks in Portland have designated OLHs.

B. Issues Associated with Dogs Off-leash in the City

There are a number of issues associated with off-leash dogs in the city, most of which are related to the following factors: (1) limited space in the city where dog owners can legally recreate with their dogs off-leash; (2) lack of enforcement of leash and scoop laws; and (3) inadequate education for dog owners about the laws and potential impacts of their dogs. These three factors lead to potentially serious impacts on health, safety, and the environment. In many ways, these impacts – real or potential – have colored the way people feel about dogs in public, and serve as the basis for arguments in favor of and against designating park space for off-leash activity.

While some of the potential impacts, such as health risks from parasites carried by dogs, have been relatively well documented, others, such as impacts of dogs on the nesting behavior of birds, are more difficult to ascertain. This study is intended to provide better understanding of the impacts of off-leash dogs in public parks and to illustrate how OLAs can be part of a strategy to address them. While OLAs are not the only solution to eliminating potential impacts, they can help reduce conflicts and protect all park users, including dog owners.

Health

One frequently cited issue associated with dogs in public open spaces is owners not picking up their dog's waste. While an obvious nuisance, unremoved dog waste can also pose potential health concerns. Dogs are commonly infected with intestinal helminths and several of these parasites can produce mild to life-threatening diseases in humans, particularly in children (Kazacos, 2000).

Roundworms, hookworms and tapeworms are common parasites found in dog waste and can lead to a number of human health problems, including lesions and cysts, vomiting, diarrhea, and, in the most serious cases, blindness and disruption of organ function (Kazacos, 2000). Also, according to the Association of Professional Animal Waste Specialists (2003), the eggs of roundworms and other parasites linger in soil for years, potentially infecting anyone who comes in contact with the soil. Young children are generally at higher risk of parasitic infections because of their increased contact with potentially-contaminated environments (Kazacos, 2000).

In addition, it is common for dogs to be infected with giardia and salmonella, two intestinal parasitic infections that can be transmitted to humans. Previous assumptions were that dogs are often the source of infection for humans, however, current research disputes this notion and indicates that human-to-human transmission may actually be more common (All Animal Veterinary Hospital, 2003).

Information on the risks associated with transmission of infections from dogs to humans is readily available. However, data on the rate of infections or occurrence of serious health problems resulting from infection are minimal. Nevertheless, the potential health and contamination impacts from dog waste are important to consider. OLAs may help to reduce risks by providing areas that are isolated from other park users. In addition, materials to educate dog owners about health risks can be distributed at the site, as well as bags for picking up dog waste.

Safety

Every Portland citizen has the inherent right to feel safe and comfortable in city parks. The current volume of complaints about park conflicts with off-leash dogs is evidence that safety – or at least sense of safety – is being threatened. Data on actual dog incidents are very limited, especially documentation of those that occur in parks with off-leash dogs. Each year Multnomah County Animal Control investigates over 800 dog bites, but the agency does not record where the bites occur (MCAC, 2003).

Regardless of the number of dog incidents, however, the fact remains that many people fear dogs and this alone provides reason for separating off-leash activity and other park uses as much as possible. By designating areas in parks for off-leash activity, conflicts that occur in parks – actual or perceived – may be reduced.

*"Off-leash dog activity ... is fundamentally different from other forms of recreation in a very important way: it involves live animals that may or may not behave erratically or unpredictably, and that many park users fear or dislike."
-- Seattle Parks & Recreation, 1997*

Also, for the more serious dog incidents, such as bites or attacks, it is important to consider the reasons why a dog may act aggressively towards humans or other dogs. The Oregon Humane Society cites many reasons for dog aggression, including fear, improper socialization, and lack of supervision or attention (Oregon Humane Society, 2003). OLAs can provide opportunities for owners to properly socialize their dogs and to learn about responsible dog ownership.

Environmental impacts

One of the long-standing arguments against allowing off-leash dogs in parks is the impact dogs can have on the environment. For instance, a top concern for the Audubon Society of Portland are impacts – direct and indirect – off-leash dogs impose on wildlife and habitat. Direct impacts include wildlife predation, as well as habitat destruction from trampling, scratching and digging of vegetation.

Audubon tracks all of the injured wildlife brought into their care center, and records, if possible to determine, the causes of injury. In 2002, Audubon estimated that three percent of wildlife injuries were directly related to dogs; however, Bob Sallinger, an Audubon wildlife biologist, says a vast majority of the injury causes cannot be determined and estimates the actual percentage to be closer to five. Interestingly, eight percent of the injured wildlife was harmed by feral cats.

Indirect impacts are more difficult to define and quantify. For instance, often when dogs chase wildlife, the prey expends significant energy to avoid an encounter. Since many wild animals, especially in urban areas, are just barely surviving, expenditure of excess energy may increase the chance of mortality. In urban wildlife areas, such as Oaks Bottom and Powell Butte in Portland, wildlife habitat is especially sensitive during nesting periods. Shorebirds nest along the periphery of the wetland pond and, if a dog enters the pond and disturbs birds, nesting may not occur. (Sallinger, 2/25/03)

*"From a conservation perspective, things could not be much worse. Right now you have dogs everywhere, no enforcement, and no educational outreach."
-- Bob Sallinger,
Audubon Society*

Degraded water quality is also a major environmental concern, as a high concentration of dogs in a confined area can lead to soil compaction and feces and urine run-off into streams. Dog feces contain fecal coliforms, Giardia and Salmonella, which can cause illness in humans (CWP, 1999). According to the Center for Watershed Protection, urban stormwater runoff routinely exceeds acceptable levels of fecal coliforms by 50 to 75 percent (CWP, 1999).

It is important to note that environmental disturbances from park uses are not confined to dogs, rather a combined effect of human activities with their dogs. Moreover, when discussing the impacts of dogs in parks where there are other users, it is difficult to determine dog impacts as compared to other users or activities. For example, a tennis player will likely have less impact than a dog, but the impervious surface of a tennis court does impose environmental impacts.

Dog owners have different perceptions about their dog's impact on the environment. In 2001, a group of Portland State University students conducted a survey at Oaks Bottom, and found that 45% of respondents felt that unleashed dogs do not have a significant impact on wildlife, as compared to 33% who felt that they do. Additionally, 60% of the respondents said leashes should not be required in wildlife areas like Oaks Bottom.

Bob Sallinger, a Wildlife Biologist for the Audubon Society, feels strongly that OLAs can help to reduce environmental impacts that dogs can inflict. He said, "I see off-leash areas as a way of targeting dogs away from the most sensitive ecological areas. If we

give dogs a place to go and educate (dog owners) about the impacts when they take them into sensitive areas, we might reduce a lot of the problems” (Sallinger, 2/25/03).

Promoting Responsible Dog Ownership

Multiple studies and reports recommend education for dog owners as a primary step in reducing park conflicts with off-leash dogs. In fact, the Audubon Society cites uneducated, irresponsible dog owners as a top cause of conflict between dog owners, other park users, and wildlife (Sallinger, 2/25/03).

Responsible dog owner education involves topics such as: proper waste removal, appropriate times to unleash and leash dogs, social responsibilities to other park users, impacts dogs can have on wildlife, habitat and water quality, and overall responsibilities dog owners have to the community. In all, dog owners have an inherent responsibility to ensure their dog does not affect quality of life for others.

Enforcement of Scoop and Leash Laws

In 1978, the City of Portland ceded a majority of its animal control jurisdiction to Multnomah County, and today Animal Control is responsible for enforcement of the leash and scoop laws. MCAC employs 16 officers with the authority to write citations to dog owners in violation of leash and scoop laws, but very minimal patrol is conducted in Portland parks. In 2002, MCAC reported issuance of 30 citations for “dogs at large” and zero citations for not removing dog waste from public areas. Unfortunately, these low citation numbers may not translate into a high level of compliance, and instead may reflect the lack of resources dedicated to the enforcement of these laws.

As indicated by the language on the MCAC webpage, the current approach to enforcement is for the public to police themselves. MCAC tells witnesses and victims of leash and scoop violations to “contact the animal’s owner on a personal, neighbor-to-neighbor basis and let him/her know about the problem” (MCAC, 2003). PP&R also recognizes the lack of proper enforcement and states, “Multnomah County Animal Control cannot be everywhere all the time, so (we) post signs, produce a brochure, and provide website information (about responsible dog ownership)” (PP&R, 2003). Unfortunately, this self-policing policy in Portland parks can only go so far, especially with minimal effort to educate dog owners about the leash and scoop laws.

C. Benefits of Off-leash Areas

Providing designated OLAs can address many of the issues listed above by isolating off-leash activities to a specific site and providing a forum to promote responsible dog ownership. This can provide many direct and indirect benefits to dogs, their owners, and the community.

Benefits to Dogs

Studies have shown that OLAs can contribute to the well being of dogs by providing a location for them to legally engage in healthy activities.

- Vigorous exercise, such as fetching, is an important factor in determining the physical and mental health of dogs. (GVRD, 2000)

- Adequate socialization of puppies is critical in order to prevent permanent emotional damage, which can result in behavioral problems such as separation anxiety, aggression and barking. (GVRD, 2000)
- Regular daily exercise provides an outlet for pent-up energy and an opportunity for contact with the outside world. (Harlock, 1995)

Benefits to Dog Owners

Dog owners benefit from having OLAs for many reasons.

- OLAs provide owners a place to legally recreate with their dogs.
- Urban consolidation creates a greater demand for open space for recreation and OLAs insure access for dog owners.
- OLAs provide elderly and disabled owners a safe place to exercise their pets.
- OLAs encourage dog owners to exercise and enjoy parks amenities.
- Dogs are happier, healthier and therefore easier to handle. (Harlock, 1995)

Benefits to the Community

The community stands to benefit from the establishment of OLAs for a number of reasons.

- OLAs encourage dog owners to recreate off-leash in sites that are not in environmentally sensitive areas (Sallinger, 2003).
- OLAs can help prevent dog aggression by providing a place for healthy exercise and socialization.
- The number of conflicts that can occur between off-leash dogs and other park users will be reduced if off-leash activity is restricted to an isolated site.
- OLAs promote responsible dog ownership, which is beneficial to the entire community.
- OLAs help build community by providing a place for dog owners to congregate and socialize with others who share a common interest.
- Dog owners and their pets increase safety in parks by creating a continual presence, especially during hours and seasons when other uses are minimal. (Harlock, 1995)



Informational kiosks are often present at OLA locations

III. Dogs in Portland

A. History of the Issue

The issue of off-leash dogs in Portland dates back to 1903, when the Oregon Legislative Assembly passed an act incorporating the City of Portland and identified loose dogs as a city problem. The act enabled the City to regulate and restrain dogs and to punish people who did not license their dogs. In 1917, further efforts to control dogs in Portland were initiated with "Ordinance 32929: Public Safety and General Welfare," which made dog owners liable for injuries incurred from loose dogs, and also prohibited dogs from entering bodies of water. It was not until 1960 that an official leash law was adopted. (Leistner, 2003)

By the 1990's, off-leash dogs and dog waste were becoming significant problems in Portland's parks and complaints about these issues were common. Subsequently during this period the notion of designating OLAs began to emerge around the country and citywide investigations about the issue of off-leash dogs in parks ensued. (Leistner, 2003). The timeline in Figure 1 highlights the key events from the history of the issue in Portland.

Recent Events

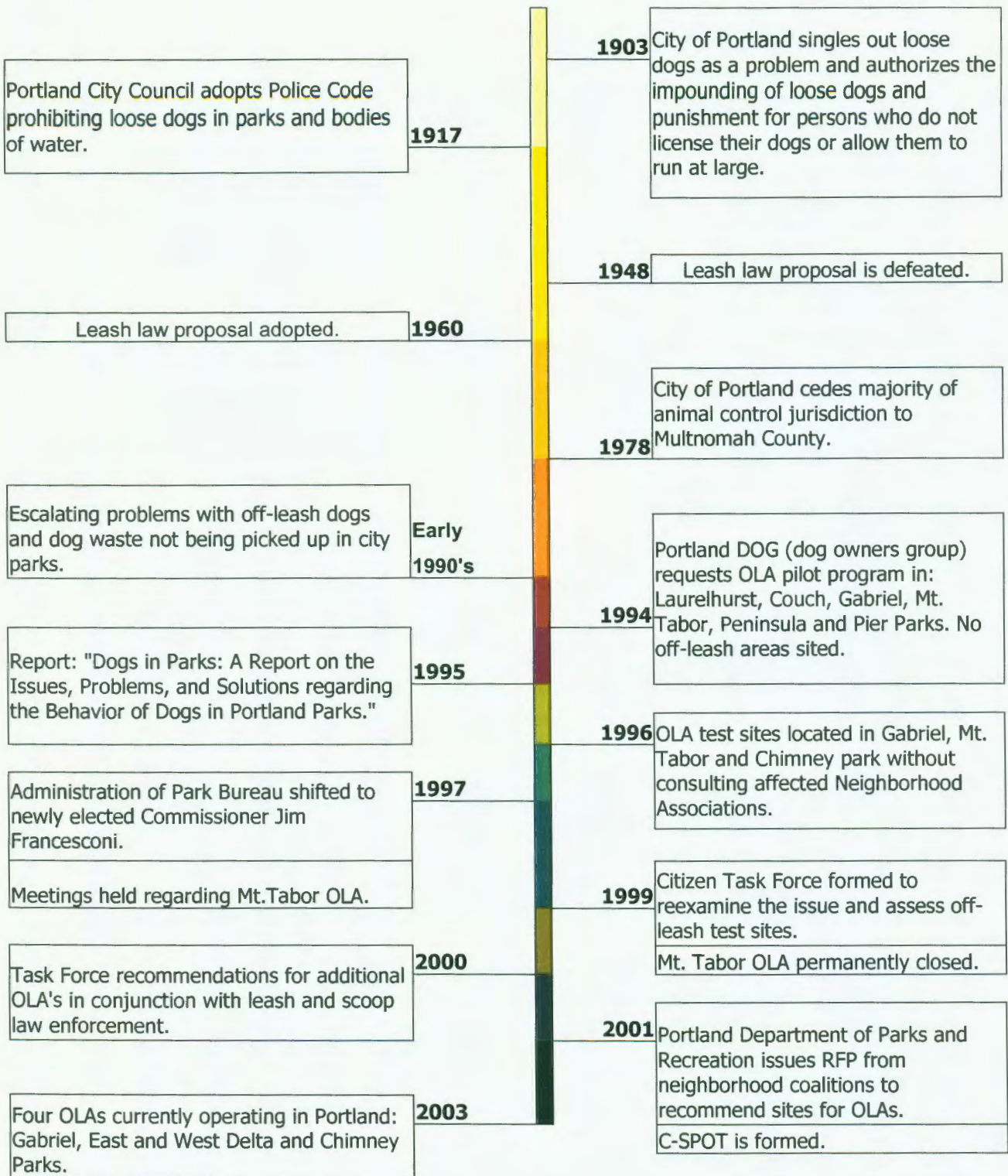
Off-leash dogs and related park conflicts have been on and off the PP&R agenda for over a decade now. The issue came to a head in 1993 when the Laurelhurst Neighborhood Association issued a formal complaint to PP&R claiming that the top two problems in Laurelhurst Park were dogs off-leash and dog waste. In 1994, PP&R hosted a public meeting with the neighborhood association to discuss the issue and hear from proponents of OLAs. The City considered Laurelhurst Park for a pilot OLA, but then decided that the issue needed more study. (Leistner, 2003)

In early 1995, City Commissioner Charlie Hales and Parks Superintendent Charles Jordan commissioned the services of a consultant to explore dog conflicts in parks throughout the city and the possibility of establishing designated OLAs in Portland. The consulting firm produced the report "Dogs in Parks: A Report on the Issues, Problems, and Solutions Regarding the Behavior of Dogs in Portland Parks" and provided the City with both a short-term action plan and recommendations for long-term solutions.

The consulting firm found that there were problems throughout the Portland park system, with most complaints about conflicts with dogs coming from Mt. Tabor Park. The consultants warned that there was growing polarization in the community around the issue. Also, the report revealed that, compared to other cities with over 10,000 acres of parkland, Portland has the lowest level of resources for enforcement of leash and scoop laws, as well as the lowest fines for noncompliance.

The "Dogs in Parks" report strongly recommended that the City of Portland develop a long-term comprehensive policy to address the issue, including designating OLAs throughout the city, record keeping of all complaints and comments, signage regarding dog laws in all city parks, and committing staff time to attend public meetings regarding the issue.

Figure 1: Timeline of the dog off-leash issue in the City of Portland



Source: Paul Leistner, 2003

In 1996, PP&R opened four trial OLAs: Chimney Park in North Portland, Gabriel Park in Southwest Portland, Mt. Tabor Park in Southeast Portland, and West Delta Park in North Portland. PP&R was widely criticized for selecting these trial sites without consulting the public or affected neighborhood associations. Responding to public pressure, PP&R convened a citizen committee to assess and report on the OLA test sites. The primary finding in the committee's report was that the OLA in Mt. Tabor was failing. In a letter to Mayor Vera Katz dated January 8, 1997, the Committee claimed, "The concept of an off-leash area has been lost. Mt. Tabor has been turned into an off-leash park ... this has driven off other park users, intensified conflicts, and created a dangerous situation in the park."

In 1997, the administration of PP&R shifted to newly elected Commissioner Jim Francesconi. That year, Commissioner Francesconi and Charles Jordan held a public meeting with the Mt. Tabor Neighborhood Association (MTNA) to discuss the problems with the OLA. At that meeting, the various issues with the Mt. Tabor OLA were brought forward; namely, the lack of enforcement, susceptibility of the reservoir to contamination, and the increasing conflicts between park users. In May 1997, the Mt. Tabor OLA was closed.

*"The root of the problem – and what makes it such an emotional issue – is a clash of expectations. Off-leash users believe that off-leash use is a legitimate use to which they are entitled. Other park users ... expect to be able to use city parks ... without having to deal with the nuisance and hazard posed by loose dogs. These expectations clash everyday in our parks."
--SE Uplift Off-leash Use Workgroup, 2003*

That summer, the public process to find a new OLA site in Mt. Tabor Park began and was facilitated by the Mt. Tabor Master Plan Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). A series of well-attended (100s of people) meetings ensued, with strong representation from both OLA proponents and opponents. Both sides vociferously criticized PP&R for their poorly run public process and mishandling of the issue.

After much public debate, a City Council Hearing, an appeal filed through the Land-Use Board of Appeals (LUBA), and a lengthy Mt. Tabor Master Plan process, the CAC concluded that an OLA was not appropriate in Mt. Tabor Park. In February 1999, the CAC wrote to Charles Jordan, while "off-leash dog areas are a legitimate use in the City of Portland and provide significant benefits for users and their dogs, ... no appropriate site exists in Mt. Tabor Park."

In June 1999, a new citizen task force was created and charged with reexamining the issue. They issued a report to PP&R in February 2000 and included strong recommendations about enforcement and education of the existing leash and scoop laws, as well as the need to designate additional OLAs throughout the city. The task force asserted, "off-leash activity in Portland parks is an altogether appropriate use of parks if effective controls can be implemented."

Responding to heightened pressure from the public, PP&R added an OLA in June 2001, at East Delta Park. In an agreement between PP&R and the Oregon Department of Transportation, a three-acre parcel in East Delta Park is currently fenced for an OLA.

In October 2001, PP&R issued a "request for proposals" (RFP) from neighborhood coalitions to make recommendations for implementation of additional OLAs throughout

the city, as well as off-leash hours in parks. There are seven neighborhood coalitions in Portland, and their boundaries are shown in Appendix H, Map 1. According to PP&R, the bureau will work towards a citywide plan after receiving all of the coalition recommendations.

Four of the seven coalitions have accepted the PP&R proposal and are working on implementation recommendations for their areas. Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. (SWNI) was the first coalition to submit a proposal and formally filed their recommendations on February 3, 2003. The East Portland Neighborhood Office (EPNO) presented their recommendations to PP&R in April 2003. Below are brief summaries of their proposals.

SWNI

In response to the PP&R RFP, Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. (SWNI) formed an advisory committee to find the most appropriate sites for OLAs in Southwest Portland. To begin, the committee created a list of criteria that was based upon common problems associated with OLAs. Each problem was evaluated, with preference given to those that were design oriented rather than enforcement oriented. Solutions were then developed for each problem, along with a set of findings, a list of preferred sites, and recommendations for implementation.

The committee provided many helpful suggestions on education, enforcement, funding, and the creation of a dog owner code of ethics. In their final report issued in November 2002, SWNI recommended three parks for OLA sites: Hillsdale, Willamette, and Gabriel, and one park, Duniway, for OLHs.

EPNO

East Portland Neighborhood Office (EPNO) established the Off-leash Site Selection Committee to select the best OLA sites in East Portland. The selection process involved site visits to 42 areas and the scoring of each based on a set of siting criteria. The results were brought to an open house held to solicit responses from area residents.

In their final report submitted in April 2003, EPNO recommended four sites as appropriate OLA candidates: East Holladay Park, Parkrose High School, Cherry Park, and Parklane Park. The committee also recommended 10 OLA development standards. The committee stressed that the two key issues that need to be resolved in order for implementation of the OLAs to be successful: enforcement and education.

PP&R has not yet publicly responded to either coalition proposal, but in a recent Oregonian article Evelyn Brenes, PP&R's point person on the dog issue, said, "Even if all seven (neighborhood) coalitions agreed to it, we wouldn't be able to implement the recommended sites for several years" (Oregonian, 4/2/03).

Recounting the recent history of the issue highlights the trials and errors that the City of Portland has experienced over the last ten years. Currently, the new site selection process with the neighborhood coalitions is in motion, but implementation is very much in flux and uncertain. PP&R is now undergoing a change in leadership, leaving many to wonder what the next steps in the process will be. Interestingly, in his final days as

Parks Superintendent, Charles Jordan admitted that dogs in parks was ... “the number one challenge in my entire career that I tell my boss that I don’t know how to solve” (Oregonian, 3/13/03).

B. Portland Parks

In the City of Portland there are 12,591 acres of parkland and open space (PP&R, 2001). PP&R owns and manages over 10,000 of these acres, making it the region’s largest provider of parks and recreation. Metro and Oregon State Parks own the remaining acres of open space in the city. (PP&R, 2001) PP&R parkland includes: 35 community parks, 47 habitat parks, 98 neighborhood parks, 12 regional parks, 12 urban parks, 5 golf courses, 6 public gardens, 25 community gardens, and thousands of acres of urban forest. (PP&R, 2001) Four parks – Chimney Park, East Delta Park, Gabriel Park, and West Delta Park – include designated OLAs. A short description of each follows.

Chimney Park

Chimney Park is a 16-acre park located in the St. Johns neighborhood in North Portland that is entirely leash free. It is an undeveloped park, and aside from a picnic table, contains no OLA amenities and incomplete fencing.



Chimney Park

East Delta Park

Across from the East Delta Sports Complex in North Portland is a 5-acre fenced field that is designated for off-leash recreation. The site has trees, benches, garbage cans, and signage. Because the site floods in the winter, it is only open during the dry season, roughly between May and October.



East Delta Park

Gabriel Park

Gabriel Park is a 90-acre park located in the Multnomah Neighborhood in Southwest Portland. A 1.5-acre area is designated as an OLA, and PP&R has provided fencing, picnic tables, garbage cans, and signage. It is a seasonal park that is only open during the dry season.

Because of the popularity of Gabriel Park, there is another site within the park for off-leash activity open year round. This site is fenced and contains signage, chairs, scoop bags, and garbage cans. Development of this site was funded by private donations and Cadre Gold, a nonprofit OLA advocacy group, provides the chairs and waste disposal bags.



Alternate OLA site at Gabriel Park

West Delta Park

West Delta Park is a 634-acre park located in the Kenton neighborhood in North Portland. A 3-acre open field area has been designated leash free. It is located adjacent to I-5 and Portland International Raceway. It is partially fenced by guardrails, has garbage cans and some signage, and is occasionally used as an overflow parking lot for the Portland International Raceway.



West Delta Park

The four OLAs total 25.5 acres, or 0.21% of city parkland, and currently just 6.5 acres are fenced.

Also important to note is that, with the exception of Gabriel Park (proximate to the Multnomah neighborhood), the OLAs are located on the outskirts of the city and accessible only by car (see Appendix H, Map 2).

In January 1997, PP&R issued siting criteria in a document named "Site Selection Guidelines for Off-Leash Area." The list included, among other things, that an OLA site: cannot replace another park use; must be at least 5,000 square feet and should ideally be 30,000 square feet; should be close to parking yet far enough away from residences to not be considered a noise problem; must be approved by the neighborhood association; must have identified sources of funding for amenities; and must not create potential problems for wildlife and habitats. Also, if the site required a fence, the neighborhood would have to pay for it.

Portland Parks & Recreation

Embedded in the PP&R mission are three interrelated responsibilities:

- To care for parks, natural areas, and the urban forest;
- To provide suitable land and facilities for public recreation; and
- To organize recreational pursuits that foster personal health and build a sense of community. (PP&R, 2001)

In July 2001, PP&R published its "2020 Vision Plan," the most recent assessment of the current park system and a strategy to plan for future park needs. The report was developed by the "Vision Team," a group of city residents and PP&R staff. While the report celebrates the legacy and successes of the Portland park system, it also recognizes its deficiencies and the many challenges that lie ahead.

A Vision Team member put it this way: "To the casual observer and user, our city's park system appears impressive. And in some ways it is. However, virtually every part of the city is lacking in important ways – many of our facilities are old and inadequate, we have a large deferred maintenance problem, and we are not adding the capacity we need to be the livable city we want to be..." (PP&R, 2001). Indeed, PP&R faces many challenges as it tries to accommodate population growth, the regional planning density goals, and the growing need for open space and recreational activities in the city.

Like many public agencies, the root of PP&R's problem is inadequate and unpredictable funding. Faced with increasing park use, rising operating expenses, an aging park

infrastructure, as well as budget cuts, the agency struggles with the limited resources it has to manage the park system. For example, currently there are only two staff people to maintain the 5,000 acres in Forest Park – one of the country's largest natural urban areas (PP&R, 2001).

For fiscal year 2002-03, the PP&R budget will total \$55.7 million, down 16.6% from the previous year (PP&R, 2002). Of this total, \$30.0 million will come from the General Fund, while the remaining \$25.7 million will come from other sources, namely, recreation user fees, facility rental fees, charges to other bureaus for landscape maintenance, grants & donations and system development charges (City of Portland, 2002).

Late in 2001, PP&R had to cut \$2.2 million, or roughly 8%, of its general fund budget, resulting in a reduction of numerous programs and services. In November 2002, voters approved a five-year local option levy, generating approximately \$8.9 million in the first year and an average of \$9.7 million each following year (City of Portland, 2003). These levy funds are dedicated to four major areas:

- Restore cuts made in FY 2002-03 (\$2.2 million);
- Improve access to recreational programs (\$1.05 million);
- Provide safe places to play (\$3.95 million); and
- Restore, renovate, and maintain the parks system (\$1.7 million).

Dollars for OLAs was not included in the levy proposal, despite the recognition by PP&R that there is a need for such areas. In contrast, the proposal does include funding for two skateboard facilities, costing approximately \$250,000 a piece. Skateboarding and OLAs are two "new" park uses that PP&R has struggled to accommodate and considers controversial as compared to traditional park uses.

The discrepancy over how parkland and funding are allocated begs the question of how park uses are matched with park space. Unfortunately, the data that could provide insight into this question are not available. PP&R is just now in the process of conducting a complete inventory of parkland throughout the city. Historically, the Department has used three classifications for parkland: developed parks, undeveloped parks, and natural areas. In the future, sub-classifications, such as softball fields, basketball courts, playgrounds, trails, and so on, will be available.

It is also difficult to quantify how the park system is currently being used. PP&R has not conducted a thorough study of park uses, making it impossible to estimate "informal" uses of parks, such as jogging and picnicking, as well as the use of tennis and basketball courts and playgrounds. In addition, the record keeping of "formal" uses, or those that require registration and fees, such as community center activities and various sports leagues, has not been consistent or complete. The best estimate comes from PP&R counts in attendance at various recreation programs. In 2001-02, PP&R counted 4,325,190 attendees at 2,129 recreation programs (PP&R, 2002).

In the decision-making process for allocating park resources, PP&R says that it uses standard planning tools: surveys, observation, national data, and neighborhood input,

along with standard national guidelines for allocating some park amenities (Yamashita, 4/7/03). The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has several relevant publications such as, "Open Space and Greenway Guidelines," "Site Design and Management Process," "Park Planning Guidelines," and, the most relevant to the OLA issue, "Planning Parks for Pets" (NRPA, 2003). Additional guidance comes from the PP&R 2020 Vision Plan. Otherwise, PP&R planners do not use any standard formulas for allocating to the various users. They look at the site conditions and the type of park (neighborhood, regional, etc.), and then choose activities that the site can accommodate.

A parks department manager from another jurisdiction in the Portland metropolitan region explained that the NRPA guidebooks are somewhat antiquated and that the current approach is to conduct extensive surveys to find out what the public wants, then use the results to guide decision-making. However, he said that realistically it is often the political process that determines the outcome of a particularly difficult issue such as the development of OLAs (Talbot, 2003).

PP&R says the goal is to install one OLA in each part of the city because, as the Mt. Tabor experience indicated, when a single area opens, users overwhelm the site and the surrounding neighborhood (Wilson, 4/4/03). In addition, PP&R recognizes the importance of using a multi-prong strategy in addressing the issue: OLA installation, enforcement, education, and ongoing maintenance (Yamashita, 4/7/03).

Clearly PP&R is mindful of the needs for an off-leash program in Portland and the importance to resolve the issue. Why then hasn't it moved forward? For any planning process to succeed leadership and commitment are critical and it appears that the process of implementing permanent OLAs in Portland has lacked these elements.

IV. Data Collection

The examination of the history and current status of the issue proved to be very enlightening. Overall, the study found that, in Portland, a rational decision-making process for implementing OLAs is lacking. Furthermore, critical pieces of information are missing: (1) how the community feels about off-leash dogs in parks; (2) how dog owners recreate with their dogs; (3) how the parks are being used by dog owners and other recreaters; and (4) where the dogs are concentrated throughout the city.

The following section shows the results from this study's web survey, park observations and GIS spatial analysis, conducted to address these questions and to provide evidence to help support an OLA program and assist in the siting of future OLAs. The methodologies for each section are in Appendix B.

A. Web survey

Many arguments surrounding dogs off-leash in parks stem from personal experience and anecdotal evidence. Some of these arguments include: off-leash dogs negatively impact wildlife and habitat; OLAs are (or aren't) beneficial to dog owners, non-dog owners, and the community; and there is (or isn't) a need for additional OLAs in Portland. Moreover, dog owners and non-dog owners are often pitted against each other as desiring different solutions concerning dogs off-leash in parks. Unfortunately, no substantive, clear measure of the public's perceptions concerning many of these issues exists.

As part of this study, a web survey was conducted to begin gauging perceptions on the issues mentioned above. Overall, the purpose of this survey was two-fold. The first objective was to gain insight to dog owner and non-dog owner perceptions on issues, including: the need for OLAs in Portland; the impacts of off-leash dogs on public health, safety and the environment; the benefits of OLAs; and the relative number of conflicts that occur between dog owners, non-dog owners and off-leash dogs in parks. The second objective was to further understand how dog owners recreate with their dogs and whether they would be willing to help establish or maintain OLAs through financial or other means. See Appendix C for the survey questions.

The survey was not scientific, and therefore, the results cannot be extrapolated to Portland's entire population. References in the findings to dog owners and non-dog owners refer only to the respondents of the survey.

Key Results and Findings

The survey yielded 353 respondents, consisting of 249 dog owners and 104 non-dog owners. This section will highlight a few of the most relevant responses. Appendix D contains the results for all of the survey questions.

Dog owner and non-dog owner questions

Table 4.1.1: Do you feel there is a need for additional off-leash areas in Portland?

Owner?	Yes	Unsure	No	Total
Dog Owner	87.6%	8.8%	3.6%	249
Non-dog owner	57.7%	22.1%	20.2%	104
Total	278	45	30	353

Findings:

Nearly 80% of all respondents feel there is a need for additional OLAs in Portland. These results could contradict the notion that non-dog owners and dog owners feel differently about the need for additional OLAs in Portland. Moreover, the remaining non-dog owners are relatively split between feeling unsure about the issue and feeling that there is not a need for additional OLAs.

Table 4.1.2: Have you experienced conflicts with off-leash dogs in Portland parks?

Owner?	Frequently	Rarely	Never	Total
Dog Owner	12.0%	55.4%	32.5%	248
Non-dog owner	35.6%	43.3%	21.2%	104
Total	66	183	103	352

*"It is nice to have an area where dogs can play without worrying about bothering non-dog people."
--Survey Respondent*

Table 4.1.3: Cross-tabulation of respondents who said there was a need for OLAs and also feel they encounter conflicts with off-leash dogs.

Need for OLA	Frequency of conflicts with off-leash dogs			Total
	Frequently	Rarely	Never	
No	25.4%	2.9%	5.5%	30
Unsure	16.4%	17.5%	8.2%	44
Yes	56.7%	79.6%	86.3%	278
Total	66	103	183	353

Findings:

Many dog owners and non-dog owners claim that they rarely encounter conflicts with off-leash dogs in parks, 55.4% and 43.3% respectively. Of the respondents who said they rarely encounter conflicts, 79.6% said they feel there is a need for OLAs. In fact, the majority of respondents who said they frequently, or even never, encounter conflicts feel there is a need for additional OLAs. Interestingly, nearly 90% of respondents who said they never encounter conflicts still feel there is a need for additional OLAs. In contrast, 35.6% of non-dog owners and 12% of dog owners feel they frequently

encounter conflicts, and the majority of the respondents also feel there is a need for more OLAs. Many dog owners and non-dog owners feel that they encounter some conflicts from off-leash dogs, which further contradicts the notion that dog owners and non-dog owners lack common viewpoints about off-leash dogs.

Table 4.1.4: Do you feel that existing leash and scoop laws are adequately enforced?

Owner?	Yes	No	Not familiar	Total
Dog owner	37.2%	58.1%	4.5%	244
Non-dog owner	9.7%	80.5%	10.6%	103
Total	101	225	21	347

Findings:

The majority of dog owners and non-dog owners feel the existing leash and scoop laws are not adequately enforced. A surprising 37.2% of dog owners feel that the existing leash and scoop laws are adequately enforced, despite the nominal enforcement in Portland parks today. This could indicate that the respondents support a no enforcement policy. The respondents who are not familiar with these laws could indicate opportunity for education and behavior change.

*"I break the leash law daily. Actually, twice daily."
--Survey Respondent*

Table 4.1.5: Responses to questions concerning whether OLAs reduce conflict, increase safety and create a sense of community.

Owner?	Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
I feel that designated off-leash areas/hours can help reduce conflicts between park users and off-leash dogs						
Dog owner	50.6%	38.6%	5.2%	3.2%	1.6%	249
Non-dog owner	27.9%	47.1%	12.5%	8.7%	3.8%	104
Total	157	145	26	17	8	353
I feel that designated off-leash areas/hours can help increase safety in Portland parks.						
Dog owner	39.8%	33.3%	13.7%	10.8%	2.0%	248
Non-dog owner	20.2%	42.3%	24.0%	11.5%	1.9%	104
Total	120	127	59	39	7	352
I feel that off-leash areas can contribute to a sense of community						
Dog owner	59.4%	28.9%	5.2%	4.4%	1.2%	247
Non-dog owner	20.2%	40.4%	24.0%	10.6%	4.8%	104
Total	169	114	38	22	8	351

Findings:

The majority of dog owners and many non-dog owners agree or strongly agree that OLAs help reduce conflicts, increase safety and contribute to a sense of community. In contrast, a minority of both dog owners and non-dog owners disagree or strongly disagree with any of the previous attributes of OLAs. Interestingly, 24% of non-dog owners are unsure whether OLAs increase safety or contribute to a sense of community.

Table 4.1.6: How should off-leash areas be funded?

Owner?	Public	Private	Combination	Total
Dog owner	22.1%	8.4%	69.1%	248
Non-dog owner	12.8%	34.6%	52.4%	101
Total	68	56	225	349

Findings:

The survey did not define whether funding would include installation, maintenance, or both. Still, the majority of respondents (64%) feel that OLAs should be funded by a combination of private and public sources, which includes nearly 70% of dog owners. Over 20% of dog owners feel OLAs should be funded solely by public sources, compared to only 8.4% who feel private sources should be used. In contrast, nearly 35% of non-dog owners think OLAs should be privately funded. Although there is a discrepancy between dog owners and non-dog owners regarding public or private sources, both groups agree that a combination of the two is most appropriate.

Other Findings (See Appendix D for tables):

- The majority of dog owners and non-dog owners visit Portland public parks either daily or weekly.
- Over 50% of dog owners strongly disagree or disagree that off-leash dogs negatively impact wildlife, wildlife habitat or water quality.
- Over 50% of non-dog owners agree or strongly agree that off-leash dogs negatively impact wildlife, wildlife habitat or water quality.
- 57.8% of dog owners think dogs should be allowed in wildlife areas only on leash whereas only 9.4% think dogs should not be allowed at all.
- Non-dog owners are evenly split between feeling that dogs should or shouldn't be allowed in wildlife areas only on-leash.
- Over 40% of dog owners and 35% of non-dog owners feel fenced OLAs are their highest priority.

Dog owner only questions

Table 4.1.7: Which of the existing off-leash areas do you use most frequently?

Responses	Percent of total
Do not use	65.1
Gabriel	21.7
East Delta	8.0
Chimney	1.2
West Delta	1.2
Total	242

"The (OLAs) are too far from my house and I do not like the idea of polluting the air so my dog and I can get exercise."
--Survey Respondent

"The (OLAs) are too far away from our home and they are too crowded because there are too few of them."
--Survey Respondent

Table 4.1.8: Why don't you use designated OLAs?

Responses	Percent of Total
Too far	60.9
Prefers non-designated off-leash areas	12.1
OLAs are unsafe	5.2
Other	4.6
Needs small dog area	2.9
Owens unfriendly dog	2.9
Dog requires fenced OLAs	2.3
Uses Tigard OLA	2.3
Prefers trails	2.3
Dislike current OLAs	1.7
Too crowded	1.7
Open seasonally	1.7
Too muddy	1.7
OLAs are boring	1.1
Uses school yards	1.1
Total	182

"My dog is small. Whenever I take her to an OLA, the big dogs scare her. I would like to see an area for big dogs and one for small dogs."
--Survey Respondent

"The park located by my house seems to be an unofficial off-leash park. I have never had the need to utilize a designated off-leash park."
--Survey Respondent

Findings:

When asked what existing OLA dog owners currently use, 64% said they do not use them at all. Moreover, the main reasons for not using OLAs were that the sites are "too far" and that the owners "prefer non-designated off-leash areas." Gabriel Park was the most popular OLA followed by East Delta, which incidentally are the only two fenced OLAs. Interestingly, only 1.2% of respondents said they use West Delta or Chimney Park, which are the unfenced areas. Other reasons for not utilizing existing OLAs ranged from "OLAs are too boring" to "OLAs are unsafe," and were fairly evenly distributed from 1% to 5% of respondents.

Other Findings: (See Appendix D for tables)

- Almost 75% of respondents said they would use a designated OLA in lieu of illegal activity if one were located near them.

- Over 75% of respondents said they would volunteer to help maintain an OLA, compared to 24% of respondents who would not.
- Nearly 60% would or do use OLAs for recreation, socialization, safety for dogs, and sense of community.
- Nearly 80% of respondents said they would contribute money to help establish or maintain an OLA, as opposed to only 21% who would not.
- Almost 31% of respondents said they would give a direct donation to help fund OLAs.

Conclusions

Both dog owners and non-dog owners feel there is a need for OLAs and recognize many benefits associated with them, including increased safety, decreased conflicts, and creating a sense of community. These shared responses illustrate that many opportunities exist to find common ground between dog owners and non-dog owners.

Funding is a common barrier to establishing and maintaining OLAs. However, according to the survey, many dog owners are willing to donate time and money to augment some of the financial and administrative strain that public agencies may incur. Moreover, many dog owners and non-dog owners agree that both public and private sectors should bear the cost of OLA amenities in Portland. Much of the focus has been on finding public land suitable for OLAs; perhaps the scope of this search can be expanded to include private and other nontraditional parklands.

B. Park Observations

Introduction

The full context of the OLA issue cannot be fully understood without examining the use of parks by dog owners and other park users. In order to roughly gauge the level and type of use in Portland public parks, the project team undertook a series of direct observations in Portland parks and the designated OLAs. These observations help to shed light on the current status of off-leash recreation in parks and potential conflicts between different users, and allow comparisons to be made between the use of parks and OLAs. The main findings are presented below. See Appendix E for the observation form and Appendix F for the complete results.

Key Results and Findings

Parks

The results of the observations revealed that "other" leisure activities, such as picnicking and hanging out in parks, was the most observed activity with 16.7% of the total number of people observed. The second highest users were dog owners with 15.9% of people observed. Users were broken up into individual categories, such as people playing baseball or basketball, and then compared with each other, rather than lumping

all organized sports participants together. Certain parks observed had a higher average number of dogs on and off-leash than other parks. Taking the average number of dogs over three visits, the three parks with the highest average number of dogs were, Gabriel with an average of 40 dogs (this does not apply to dogs in Gabriel OLA), Mt. Tabor with an average of 28 dogs, and Laurelhurst with an average of 21 dogs.

Part of the direct observation task was to document any issues or conflicts with off-leash dogs in parks. The project team counted the number of dogs in playgrounds, dogs approaching other users or chasing wildlife. Out of a total of 504 dogs, 72% were observed recreating off-leash, with the remaining 28% on-leash. Only 4% of the 504 dogs were observed entering playgrounds and 3.2 % were observed approaching other users. Just 0.8% were observed chasing wildlife in parks.

OLAs

In the observations conducted at the four designated OLAs, 113 dog owners were counted, most of whom were visiting the fenced OLAs, Gabriel Park (51.3%) and East Delta (38.9%). The unfenced OLAs, West Delta and Chimney Park, were considerably less used, 8% and 1.8% respectively.

Conclusions

The observations indicate that people recreate with their dogs in parks in large numbers compared to other users, and are second only to other leisure activities, which includes picnicking and 'hanging out.' The majority of dogs observed in non-off-leash areas were off-leash. The current OLAs are located in remote parts of the city that are inconvenient, making illegal off-leash activity in parks the choice that many people make given the lack of alternatives. If OLAs were conveniently available, some of the people letting their dogs off-leash in parks might use an OLA instead. The level of usage appears to also be based on whether or not the OLA is fenced.

The observations suggest that a large number of people are choosing to recreate with their dogs in parks, on and off-leash, giving them a regular presence in parks. This presence can be helpful in keeping parks safe, as it provides "eyes on the park." The high number of people using parks illegally for off-leash activity may be an educational issue that could be addressed through training and responsible dog ownership.

Certain parks appear to have higher levels of usage for dog-related recreation. Of the parks observed, Gabriel, Mt. Tabor and Laurelhurst had the highest average number of dogs. This may indicate a large presence of dogs in nearby neighborhoods and the desire of area dog owners to use these parks to recreate with their dogs on and off-leash.

C. Spatial Analysis

The success of OLAs can be attributed, in part, to their location in relation to the residences of dog owners who use them. For instance, off-leash facilities that are sited too far from dog owning residences may have limited use. Alternatively, off-leash facilities in areas with a high concentration of dog owners could become overused

(consider the Mt. Tabor Park example). Easy accessibility and short travel time increases the attractiveness of OLAs to nearby dog owners. The purpose of this section is to gain an understanding of the distribution of dog owners in the City of Portland, their spatial relationship to current off-leash facilities, and concentration around existing parks and open space.

Dog licensing data was obtained from the Multnomah County Animal Control (MCAC) and used in conjunction with a Geographical Information System (GIS). Since not all dog owners license their pets, MCAC estimates their data represents about one third of the total number of dogs in the county. Using a combination of available Portland datasets and geographic modeling tools available in the GIS, several different analyses were conducted to examine the spatial distribution of dogs. For a complete review of all the analyses, see Appendix G. The highlighted analyses are: the number of dogs in Portland neighborhoods, owner distances to OLAs, counts of dogs within a ¼ mile of parks and open space, and general dog density clusters.

Key Results and Findings

Each of the analyses performed in this section help provide more insight on the distribution of dog owners in the City of Portland. Through these analyses we can examine several aspects concerning the location of dog owners, including: location by neighborhood, density "hot spots", and straight-line travel distance to current off-leash facilities. Additionally, information concerning the concentration of dogs around city parks can help future planning efforts for OLAs.

Owner Distances to Off-Leash Areas

This analysis calculated the distance from each licensed dog address to the center of each park with OLAs. The distances measured are straight line or "as the crow flies" and do not take into consideration the extra distance traveled using surface transportation corridors, which is farther.

Figure 4.3.1: Average distance of dog owners to designated off-leash areas based on licensed dogs data.

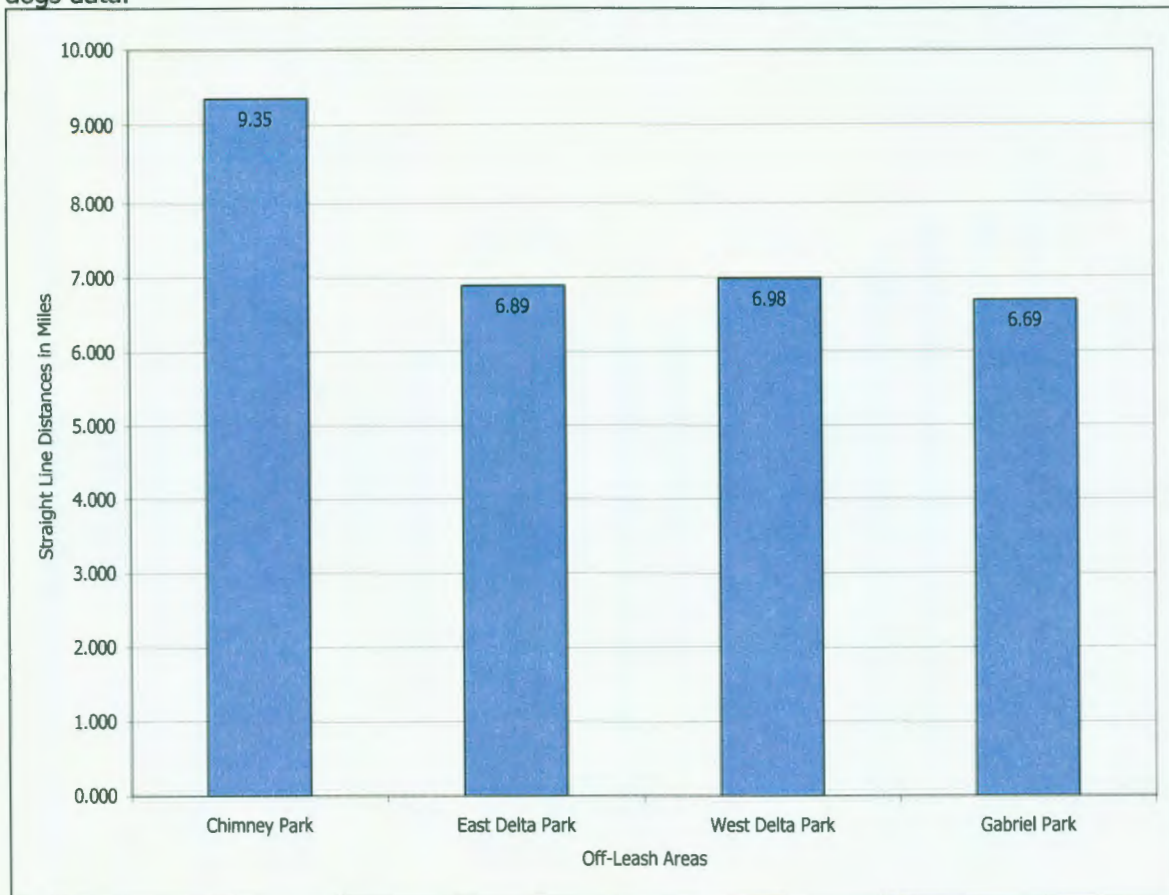


Table 4.3.1: Summary statistics for the distance of dog owners from designated OLAs.

Statistic	West Delta	Gabriel	East Delta	Chimney
Average	6.98	6.69	6.89	9.35
Median	7.41	6.99	7.27	9.79
Minimum	0.42	0.17	0.47	0.30
Maximum	13.21	13.07	12.88	16.05
Standard deviation	2.91	2.59	2.79	3.25

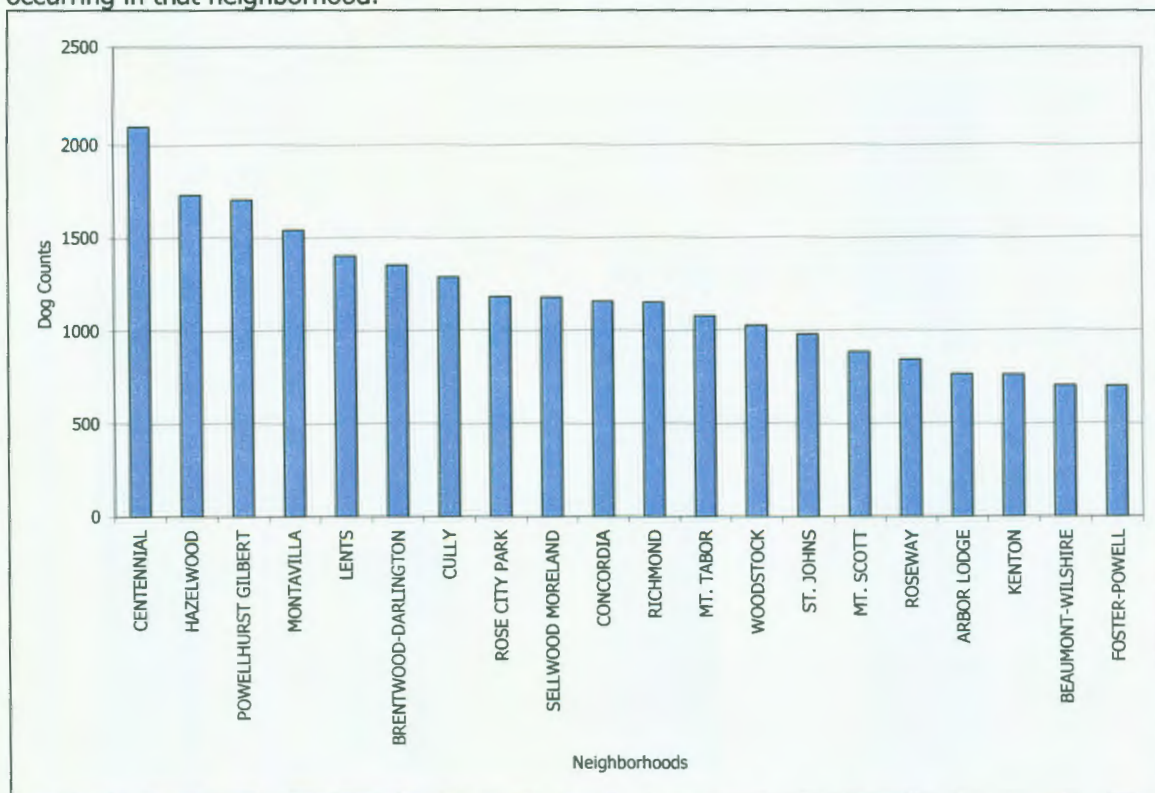
Findings:

The average distance between dog owners and existing off-leash facilities in Portland is 7.47 miles. Only Gabriel Park provides an OLA within normally acceptable walking distance (.25 miles) of licensed dogs (Meyer, 2001). The farthest licensed dogs from OLAs range from 13 miles to 16 miles. The median distance from all OLAs is greater than the average, meaning more licensed dogs are farther away than the average indicates (see Appendix H, Map 3).

Neighborhood Counts

This analysis counted the number of dog owners within each of Portland’s neighborhoods. The results show a wide range of dog ownership spread throughout city neighborhoods.

Figure 4.3.2: Top 20 dog populated neighborhood based solely on the number of licensed dogs occurring in that neighborhood.



Findings:

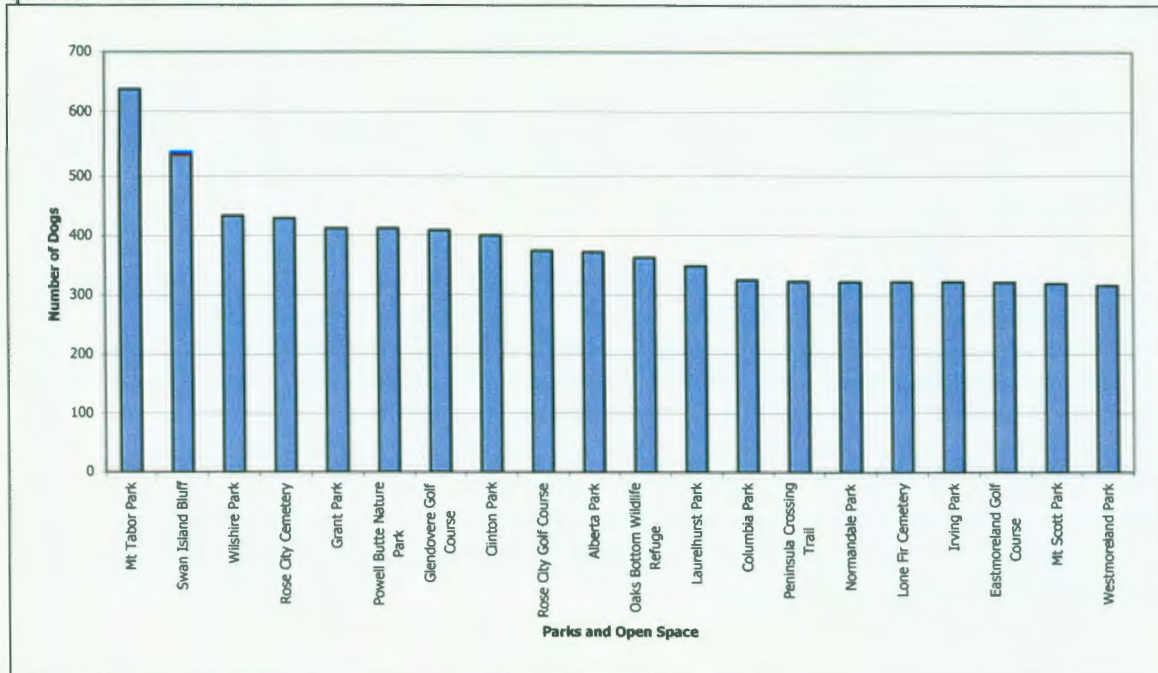
Centennial, Hazelwood, Powellhurst Gilbert, Lents and Montavilla are the top five dog owning neighborhoods, with over 1,100 dogs each (see Appendix H, Map 1). The mean number of dog owners per neighborhood is 422 and the median was 298, indicating there are neighborhoods that have high numbers of licensed dogs. Of the top ten neighborhoods with the most licensed dogs, Concordia (1,156 dogs) was the closest to an existing OLA (see Appendix G). Centennial, the neighborhood with the highest number of licensed dogs, was one of the farthest from all OLAs (see Appendix G).

Count of Dog Owners within ¼ Mile of Parks and Open Space

A count of licensed dogs within a ¼ mile (acceptable walking distance standard) was done by buffering the parks and open space in Portland and tallying the number of licensed dogs within the buffer.

*"We don't own a car and none are conveniently located near our home"
 --Survey response when asked why they don't use OLAs*

Figure 4.3.3: Top twenty parks or open space with the most number of dogs within one-quarter mile.



Findings:

None of the current parks containing OLAs were in the top 30 parks or open space with the most dogs within a ¼ mile and only Gabriel was in the top 100. Interestingly, Mt. Tabor Park has more dogs within a quarter mile than any other park or open space in Portland with a count of 638 (see Appendix H, Map 4).

General Density Clusters

The density analysis revealed that licensed dogs in Portland are not evenly distributed and that there are clusters, or “hot spots,” of licensed dogs throughout the city.

Findings:

Visual analysis of Map 4 in the Appendix clearly illustrates the clustering of licensed dogs, especially on the eastside between Martin Luther King Boulevard and 82nd Ave. north of I-84, and south of Hawthorne to the City boundary. Additionally, there is a “hot spot” south of Stark Street east of 122nd Avenue. Current OLAs are not located in any of the densest dog owning areas (see Appendix H, Map 4).

Conclusions

Currently there is an inequity in the spatial distribution of OLAs in Portland. The spatial analyses provide evidence that the current OLA sites are not in locations that are near dense populations of licensed dogs. Comparing neighborhood counts of dogs in Portland and the distances that the owners of those dogs need to travel to an OLA supports the notion of inequitable OLA distribution.

Centennial neighborhood is home to the highest number of licensed dogs, but is also one of the farthest away from the OLAs. Moreover, none of the top five dog owning neighborhoods is within 7 miles of an OLA (see Appendix G).

The spatial analysis illustrates that numerous Portland parks and open spaces have hundreds of licensed dogs within a ¼ mile. This conclusion supports the survey results showing that the primary place dog owners recreate with their dog off-leash is in nearby Portland parks, and the reason they don't use OLAs is because they are too far.

Additionally, it was found that of all the parks and open space in Portland, Mt. Tabor has the most number of dogs within walking distance, a fact that may have contributed to its failure as an OLA. Moreover, four of the parks in the observation study with high off-leash use – West Moreland, Mt. Tabor, Laurelhurst, and Irving – were also among the top twenty in terms of numbers of licensed dogs within ¼ mile.

GIS and spatial analysis are powerful tools that provide information about where things are and how they are distributed. Therefore, using these tools to improve the information base about the dog owning constituents will result in a more informed and rational decision-making process.

V. Case Studies

Introduction

Previous sections have painted the picture of the off-leash issue in the City of Portland. To move forward with implementation strategies, it is important to examine the experiences in other cities and learn from their successes and failures in implementing off-leash programs and policies. San Francisco, California; Seattle, Washington; and Vancouver, British Columbia were selected because they compare with Portland in size and demographics, and for the most part, in climate.

Key informants were identified from each city including Parks Department staff members involved with off-leash programs. In-depth interviews were then conducted, by phone in the case of San Francisco and Vancouver, and in person in Seattle. The interviews were supplemented with review of pertinent documents and web research.

A. San Francisco, California

City Profile

The City of San Francisco has a population of approximately 776,773 (2000 Census) and according to SFDOG, an off-leash advocacy group, 1 in 4 households has a dog. The true number of dogs in the city is not known, but the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department (RPD) estimates the number to be approximately 120,000. A solid number has been difficult to gauge in part because only about 8,000 dogs are licensed in the city. The city has 230 parks totaling approximately 3,033 acres and currently has 20 designated OLAs. Most of their OLAs are not fenced and many are in need of other amenities such as water, signage, scoops and garbage cans.

Implementation of Off-leash Areas

San Francisco has had areas in parks for off-leash play for 25 years, but rapid population growth and increasing density has caused the issue to become more prominent in recent years. OLAs really started to become an issue with about 5 ½ years ago when a federally owned park, Fort Funston, was closed to off-leash dogs despite its long standing status as a de facto off-leash park. Increased ticketing on federal lands caused greater use of city parks for off-leash use and conflicts began to occur between dog owners and non-dog owners as people competed for limited space in city parks.

Not long after the closure of Fort Funston to off-leash dogs, a \$400 million bond measure was passed for making improvements to San Francisco's run down park system. Improvements had not been made since the 1950s. San Francisco's RPD began to embark on a capital plan with the bond money and started a master planning process for city parks. For several of the parks the process became stalled over which park amenities and uses should be included in master plans, specifically regarding the OLA issue. Realizing that the dog owning constituency was not going to back down and that there was clearly a need to resolve the issue, the parks department decided to form a dog park task force in 1998. The task force made the recommendation to the RPD to

create additional OLAs. Following the task force recommendation, the parks department began researching and compiling information regarding OLAs from around the country and the world to write an official policy on OLAs. They began drafting policy in 2000 to outline the standards for OLAs, where they would be allowed and the process for implementing additional OLAs.

With the release of a draft of the Dog Policy on June 12, 2001 the RPD took public comment on the policy. The RPD considered over 2,700 responses to the document and nearly 300 staff hours were spent reading, evaluating and incorporating suggestions from the public. Many members of the public did not agree with the policy, but the majority said that there should be designated off-leash zones and better scoop and leash law enforcement. Following the public input phase and changes, the final Dog Policy was released and adopted in May 2002.

The Dog Policy requires the formation of a dog advisory committee as a mechanism for creating additional OLAs. The committee is made up of representatives from dog advocacy groups such as SFDOG, veterinarians, the Audubon society, the Native Plants Society and others. The policy also requires an active volunteer partner program to assist with monitoring and maintenance of OLAs and must be in place to monitor and maintain existing OLAs, as well as newly created ones. The RPD provides materials and tools to volunteers to help maintain the OLAs as well. So far the process has been moving slowly while members of the advisory committee receive training. They are currently working towards establishing 5 additional OLAs. OLAs will be added as parks are renovated. Additionally, the Dog Advisory Committee is responsible for developing performance measures to determine success or failure of individual OLAs.

Because most of San Francisco's OLAs contain few amenities, including fencing, little money has been needed to establish new ones. What little money is needed for establishing OLAs comes from the general operating budget, which is \$73 million for this year. Some of the costs for new OLAs will also be folded into the \$400 million capital plan budget. The RPD has the primary responsibility for providing resources for the establishment, maintenance and management of basic OLAs. According to the Dog Policy, the RPD will work with the dog advisory committee and other government agencies to identify resources through additional city monies, grants, private and corporate funding and agency partnerships.

The RPD has made an effort to distribute OLAs throughout the city. There are some areas that do not have an OLA because San Francisco's parks are not equally distributed throughout the city (Ballinger, 4/29/03). SFDOG has been critical of the current OLAs stating that they are "inadequate and incomplete." However, the RPD is currently more concerned with establishing areas for off-leash play and not amenities, which they expect will come later and will require efforts from volunteers and additional funding.

Enforcement of leash and scoop laws is done by an agency called Animal Care and Control, which is empowered by the city and county. There are currently seven animal control officers monitoring parks and handing out citations for violations. Current fines for non-compliance with the leash law are \$16.00 and non-scooping is \$27.00. According to one Animal Care and Control employee, the development of OLAs has

helped increase the number of people obeying the leash and scoop laws. There are however people who do not comply with these laws and a faction of dog owners has emerged that does not support the creation of OLAs and instead advocates for the abolishment of the leash law all together.

Challenges

The process of writing the Dog Policy was time consuming and controversial. It was not possible to appease all of the stakeholders involved and many people think that it is too restrictive, while others think it is too permissive. San Francisco has an intense political environment and many vocal citizen constituencies, which has caused conflicts in some communities. According to Becky Ballinger, Public Relations Manager for RPD, it has been a very emotional issue and has divided many neighborhoods, more so than any other issue in the city (Ballinger, 4/29/03).

It has been a challenge to find appropriate sites for OLAs and some of the sites are currently less than perfect from a dog owner's perspective. Many have steep slopes and are near busy streets. San Francisco is a densely populated and compact city of approximately 47 square miles, which contributes to the difficulty of balancing uses within the 230 parks. Despite efforts at finding more OLA sites, there may be limited opportunities to find additional adequate sites.

OLAs have maintenance needs specific to them and one of the issues San Francisco has not found a solution to is the problem of dog waste disposal. Garbage cans full of dog waste are heavy and additional burdens have been placed on the park's gardening staff to lift and empty them. There is also concern over large amounts of dog waste going into landfills. The RPD is currently looking for solutions to this problem.

Secrets to Success

The city of San Francisco has had a difficult time resolving this issue and it is still a work in progress. They have responded to the needs of dog owners by designating numerous OLAs throughout the city, drafting official policy that lays out how to proceed with implementation and recognizes that off-leash play is a valid use of parkland. It has not been a perfect effort and there is much room for improvement in terms of the quality of the OLAs, but it has moved forward because of the efforts of many vocal citizens and the RPD's recognition that the issue needed to be addressed. The Dog Policy is important for ensuring that OLAs continue to exist and that more are created to meet the needs of dog owners.



Delores Park, San Francisco

B. Seattle, Washington

City Profile

The City of Seattle population is approximately 540,500 (2001). According to the Animal Control Division, nearly 23,000 dogs are licensed in the city; however, the Division estimates that in reality there are approximately 145,000 dogs in the city. Seattle has just over 6,000 acres of parkland, making up about 10% of the City's total land area. Seattle Department of Parks & Recreation manages the nearly 400 parks in the city, and currently has eight OLAs distributed throughout the city.



Seattle OLA Locations
Source: www.coladog.org

Implementation of Off-leash Areas

Park conflicts related to off-leash activity have been an issue in Seattle for about a decade. In 1993, Seattle's Finance Department directed the Parks Department and Animal Control to increase enforcement of animal control laws in order to raise much-needed revenue for the city. The departments responded and stepped up patrolling in parks and the issuance of tickets to dog owners who were not in compliance with the city leash law. This led to a vigorous backlash from the dog owning community, who felt that it was unfair to ticket off-leash recreation without providing alternative sites to take dogs off-leash.

The ensuing public complaints about animal control – and the internal complaints about the vocal dog owners in the city – came to the attention of the Seattle City Council in 1994. Council member Jan Drago personally took on the issue and initiated the public process to address the conflict and evaluate the need to designate OLAs in Seattle parks.

The first meeting to determine support for OLAs was held on October 18, 1994. Over 400 Seattle citizens attended the meeting and divided into 6 groups (based on where they lived) to discuss potential sites around the city. Over the next six months, these subgroups met and submitted proposals for off-leash sites to the city. The proposals were turned over to a citywide advisory group made up of city staff, members of several local citizen groups, and off-leash advocates, which had informally organized into a group called COLA, or Citizens for Off-leash Areas.

The advisory group developed a set of criteria to evaluate the proposals, and eventually selected 38 potential sites throughout the city. In the spring of 1995, each site was revisited and public workshops were co-sponsored by the City Council, Parks Department and Animal Control to discuss the proposals with citizens. Over 500 people attended the workshops and nearly 2,000 comment forms and letters were sent to the City Council.

Ultimately, eight sites were selected as pilot sites and, on June 15, 1996, the City Council issued a directive to the Parks Department to launch a 15-month off-leash pilot program. The directive included the implementation of an agreement between the Parks Department and COLA to outline the provision of stewardship and maintenance for the pilot sites, training and education programs, and fundraising activities to provide revenue to offset the costs of the sites. Much to the chagrin of city staff, no additional funding was approved for the pilot program, so both Parks and Animal Control had to move the program forward with existing resources, or get creative.

The Parks Department estimates \$34,000 in startup costs for the eight pilot sites – which provided for fencing, kiosks, signage, and trash cans. These costs were eventually reimbursed by the “Help the Animals” fund, a fund that is traditionally used to provide medical services for animals that are injured, sick or abused. The Department incurred an additional, “out-of-pocket” cost of \$69,000 for maintenance, and administration. Thus, the total spent during the pilot program was \$93,000.

Much of the administrative costs included staff time and resources dedicated to monitoring and evaluating the pilot program as it evolved in the first year. The Parks Department took evaluation very seriously, as they recognized it would be essential in determining the future of the off-leash program.

At the onset of the pilot program, Parks staff videotaped each site and conducted a thorough survey of site conditions. They also designated a Parks district representative for each site, who took responsibility for monitoring their site and reporting observations to the Department. Also, throughout the pilot program, Parks kept a detailed record of all communications with the public from every medium: mail, email, phone, in person, etc. The recorded comments ranged from: “Site is great – we go daily,” to “Need better enforcement outside of OLA,” to “It’s ugly and junky.” These comments proved to be invaluable when the City revisited the issue to determine the success and failure of pilot sites and the program-as-a-whole.

In August 1997, the pilot program was declared a success and the Seattle City Council voted 9-0 to create a permanent off-leash program. The Council also directed COLA to obtain legal status as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and – through a stewardship agreement with Parks – formally take on the responsibility of maintaining the sites. Today, there are two levels of agreements between Parks and COLA. The first is an “umbrella” agreement, which outlines the general purposes of the collaboration. The second is a site-specific agreement between a COLA site steward and a Parks staff person, generally the grounds maintenance crew chief for the area.

Of the eight initial pilot sites, six are still in place today. The Parks Department closed two pilot sites because they were too close to residences, as they quickly learned from the flood of neighborhood complaints. Since then, two new sites have been added, bringing the total number of OLAs in the city back to eight. Also, currently there are two active proposals for additional sites: a 12,000 square foot lot in downtown and a site on Washington Department of Transportation property under the I-5 Interstate.

It is important to note that the eight OLAs that are in place today have slowly evolved over time. They started first with basic amenities, such as fencing (required in City Council resolution), kiosks, signage, and garbage cans. Over the last few years, the sites have become more sophisticated and upgraded with water access, double-gates, scoop bag dispensers, benches, shelters, picnic tables and, at a few sites, Sanicans to dispose dog waste. Also, some sites, like Dr. Jose Rizal and Magnuson Parks, have winding trails so dog owners can benefit from exercise as well.

According to COLA, the next items on the "wish list" for the off-leash sites are lights and equipment storage bins. Funding for new amenities, such as these, primarily comes from a now well-established "Off-leash Area Fund." The fund is supported by 10% of the dog licensing fee revenue and private donations, and administered by Animal Control. Another fund available to COLA for off-leash amenities and projects is the Neighborhood Matching Fund, to which community groups can apply for public improvements.

To generate more OLAs, the Parks Department is currently considering the implementation of a permit system – or electronic key card – for entry into OLAs. This, of course, would not be an easy program to initiate, as COLA is vehemently opposed to the idea.

Challenges

For implementation of its off-leash program, Seattle is a success story. But, of course, there were, and still are, many challenges to face.

It appears as though the greatest challenge has been the emotion and contention that has existed around the issue since its onset. The public process in developing and evaluating the off-leash program has been laden with crowded public meetings that last for hours and thousands of written public comments. Dewey Potter of Seattle Parks & Recreation says that, in her experience as a public employee, she has never seen an issue draw such large crowds (Potter, 5/5/03).

Also, it is important to recognize the tension that is felt between the Seattle Parks Department and COLA. The 1997 City Council resolution mandated collaboration between the parties, and today both acknowledge the "love-hate" nature of their relationship. On the one hand, the stewardship agreement works because it makes the roles of each party very clear. On the other hand, the agreement doesn't work because both parties have very high expectations of the other. For instance, the Parks Department claims COLA isn't properly maintaining the off-leash sites. At the same time, COLA claims more OLAs are needed and that the Department isn't doing enough to meet the needs of dog-owners. The tension that exists between the parties is real and, at times, problematic. However, as Dewey Potter explains, "What has made the relationship work is constant communication" (Potter, 5/5/03).

Also, the Parks Department experienced much frustration during the pilot program when the pilot sites did not decrease the number of complaints about dog conflicts in parks. They have since realized that "the biggest problem is not the OLAs themselves, but

rather the behavior of dog owners in other park areas” (SDPR Memo, 2/27/03). Thus, education and enforcement have also presented challenges to the successful implementation of their off-leash program. And, like Portland, Seattle faces budgetary constraints; in 2002, both Parks and Animal Control had to adjust to significant cuts in their operating budgets.

Secrets to Success

There are many things that Seattle has “done right” in the handling of the off-leash issue. In developing the pilot program, the City departed from the traditional public hearing format and held interactive public workshops. These were intentionally designed to get people to brainstorm ideas and to offer recommendations.

As mentioned earlier, the careful monitoring of the pilot program and pilot sites was invaluable to the evaluation of the pilot program and the decision-making process when implementing the official off-leash program.

In the interviews conducted for this study, both Parks and COLA named the second level of agreement between the parties as a success. That is, the working relationship between the Parks staff person and COLA steward assigned to each site that seems to effectively function as the interface between the two parties.

The Off-leash Area Fund has been critical as a stable, dedicated source of revenue for installing and improving OLAs. In addition, there is little doubt that the City Council mandate was key to the implementation in that it put direct pressure on the Parks Department to act – and to succeed. Indeed, without a City Council champion, its difficult to predict whether Seattle would be where it is today with its off-leash program.



Seattle’s “Port-a-Potty on a Half Shell,” a creative solution to deal with dog waste



Seattle’s Magnuson OLA offers water access for dogs

C. Vancouver, British Columbia

City Profile

According to Statistics Canada, the population for the City of Vancouver in 2001 was 545,671. Vancouver has around 200 parks with 29 designated OLAs or hours that allow dog owners to exercise their dogs off-leash from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. All OLA/OLHs have signage, not all have scoop bags, and only a few have water or are fenced.

Implementation of Off-leash Areas

In the mid-1990's, citizens began to push for the parks department to provide designated OLAs. At that time it was illegal to allow a dog to run off-leash anywhere in the city. Glen Swain, founder of Vancouver Dog Owner's association was the person who began the movement to persuade the Parks Department to create designated OLAs in city parks. After a period of reviewing public input on the matter, parks department initiated a process to address the issue.



Vancouver's distribution of OLAs
Source: Vancouver Parks & Recreation Department

In 1997, the parks board conducted a survey of city residents indicating that 46% of households include at least one dog. The parks department decided to conduct a one-year pilot project in which they designated OLA/OLHs in four city parks. After a year, parks assessed the results of the pilot project and determined that the OLA/OLHs were working well. The main public concern was that dog owner's were flooding to the four OLA/OLHs causing a high amount of wear on the park area and negative spillover effects on the neighbors, such as traffic and noise. Parks department staff reported these results to the parks board with the recommendation that the city create a high number of permanent OLA/OLHs in order to geographically disperse the negative impacts.

The approach the Parks Department took to decide on the best sites for the OLA/OLHs was to have staff develop a set of criteria and select park locations that best fit those parameters. After going through the siting analysis, staff recommended 29 sites geographically dispersed throughout the city. These recommendations were then put before the public for review. The citizens of Vancouver voiced little opposition to the plan, and in 1998, all of the sites were approved for implementation by the parks board.

Funding was not a major concern because the incremental funding requirements were minimal since few areas were fenced. Signage and scoop bag costs were paid out of the operating budget. Additional funding was occasionally requested for unanticipated expenditures or special projects.

The Vancouver parks department prefers not to use fences in OLA/OLHs because they like to preserve the areas for multi-use so that other users can share the same space with the OLA/OLHs. According to parks staff, the goal is to have areas where park users could have a picnic in the same location of an OLA/OLH. The key to success is to keep impacts to a minimum. Wear and tear of OLA/OLHs are rated on a scale of 1 to 3; a rating of 1 equals light wear, 2 moderate wear, and 3 heavy wear. The most recent survey found three areas with heavy wear, two with moderate, and 24 with light wear. The parks department assumes responsibility for all maintenance costs.

From 1998-2001, the enforcement program focused 100% on education. Parks staff worked directly with the general public to encourage users to follow off-leash park rules. Park rangers handed out brochures that were created to be an educational tool. In 2002, parks department staff began to enforce the leash and scoop laws. Since then, only about 100 tickets have been issued.

Currently, the city is aware that many people unlawfully use non-designated park areas to recreate with their dogs off-leash. According to Bill Manning, Manager of Operations of Vancouver B.C. Parks & Recreation, the downside to enforcement is that it may push people to the designated OLA/OLHs thus increasing concentration of usage and the associated spillover effects. This would probably result in an increasing number of complaints by neighbors.

Input from the community is used to measure program performance. The number of complaints about off-leash dogs in parks has increased in the last few years. In response, the city recently decided to conduct a thorough survey of the community in order to gauge current public sentiment on the issue. They will use the results of the survey to determine whether they should increase or decrease the number of sites, or adjust the off-leash hours. Parks management feels that this is an issue that will never have a final solution; it must be reevaluated on a regular basis and the appropriate adjustments should be made.

Challenges

One of the original 29 sites, Heather Park, was removed from the OLA/OLH program after a significant amount of public discussion about the suitability of the site as an OLA/OLH. Heather Park contains tennis courts, sports fields, and a children's play area. There were numerous complaints that the large number of off-leash dogs in the park was interfering with the ability of other users to recreate. The parks board heard testimony from public and subsequently chose to remove the park from the OLA/OLH program citing concern that a single user group was monopolizing of the area.

Secrets to Success

Many who are interested in the issue consider the Vancouver Parks Department's off-leash program a success. In fact, in May of 2000 the City of Vancouver Parks Department participated in a symposium called Canine Conundrum that was sponsored by the Greater Vancouver Regional District, which manages 22 regional parks in the Lower Mainland. The Vancouver Parks Department conducted a workshop called "Off-Leash Programs for Dogs – Vancouver's Experience."

An important factor in Vancouver's success appears to have been the decision to geographically disperse a large number of OLA/OLHs in order to reduce the negative spillover effects. Benefits of this strategy include reduced wear and tear of parkland, fewer negative impacts on neighbors such as increased noise and traffic, and fewer conflicts between other park users in multi-use areas. As mentioned above, the downside to enforcement of leash laws in non-OLA/OLHs is that it can force dog owners into OLA/OLHs, further concentrating the dog population. It is worth noting that since parks began to enforce the leash laws in 2001, the number of non-owner complaints has increased.

According to Bill Manning, there were three keys to the successful implementation of OLA/OLHs in Vancouver: a vocal citizens group, cooperative city staff, and a willing elected body. The initial impetus for OLA/OLHs began as a grass roots movement that was quickly and efficiently addressed by parks staff. The pilot project and implementation of permanent OLA/OLHs were conducted in a professional and decisive manner. But the ultimate decision to implement was a political choice that elected officials were willing to make.

The political decision was backed the citizens of Vancouver who wholeheartedly support the concept of OLA/OLHs. The Vancouver Sun conducted a random survey of 800 British Columbians in October of 2000 and found that 79% of Vancouver residents supported and only 18 % opposed the idea of designating a certain amount of existing green space in local parks as OLAs (Vancouver Sun, 2002).

The overwhelming support of the citizens of Vancouver has enabled the parks department to avoid resorting to creative options such as public/private partnerships in order to develop and maintain OLA/OLHs. This fact is in contrast to many jurisdictions in the United States that seem to be unwilling to allocate the monetary and staff resources required to provide OLA/OLHs, a park amenity that that has been determined to be a legitimate need of the high percentage of dog owning constituents.

E. Other approaches

There are countless examples around the United States of jurisdictions successfully implementing off-leash programs, and many that have taken exceptionally innovative approaches. To supplement the three in-depth case studies, below are five brief examples from other cities and their experiences in implementing OLAs.

Charlotte, North Carolina

Charlotte celebrated the opening of its first OLA in October 2002 at the McAlpine Creek Community Park. Its installation was facilitated through a partnership between the County Parks & Recreation Department and FIDOCarolina, a citizen advocacy group. The goal is to install at least one major OLA (2-5 acres) in each of Charlotte's nine park districts, as well as several smaller neighborhood dog exercise areas. The second dog park, Reedy Creek Dog Park, is slated to open Spring 2003.

The existing and planned OLAs are being funded by community donations and revenues generated by the "Pooch Pass," a permit that dog owners can purchase to use the OLAs. The cost for an annual pass is \$35 for one dog, and \$15 for each additional dog. Daily passes are also available. The pass is required to access all OLAs, and functions as a scan/swipe card at the OLA gates. (www.fidocarolina.org/)

Gainesville, Florida

Dogwood Park is a privately run OLA that consists of 15 fully fenced acres. Really, the concept is more like a country club for dogs than an OLA. The park has swimming ponds, trails, shade trees, hammocks, exercise equipment for people, and tennis balls. Access to the park requires membership, which runs between \$234 a year for 24 hour, 7 day a week access and \$195 a year for weekend access for one dog. Each additional dog is 20% of the single dog rate. Also, people may volunteer their time at the park in exchange for membership. Members are given a key FOB for access when park is not staffed. The park also has onsite doggy-daycare, dog wash, dog book lending library, massage, and obedience training. Two-acre areas may be fenced off and rented for parties and events.

Dogwood Park has a number of rules that must be followed in order to use the facilities, including: a three dog per person limit, guests must clean up after their dogs, dogs must be licensed, no kids under 10 allowed, aggressive dogs must be controlled, and no digging. Dogwood Park was designed to provide a fun and safe place for dogs and people to enjoy together. The park opened in 1998. (www.dogwoodpark.com)

Ramsey County, Minnesota

Ramsey County is located in southeastern Minnesota and contains 17 cities including the City of St. Paul. According the U.S. Census Bureau, the estimated population in 2001 for the county was 508,667. There are three regional parks that have designated OLAs: Rice Creek (13-acre), Battle Creek (10-acre), and Woodview (5-acre).

In October 1996, an off-leash advocacy group, Responsible Owners of Mannerly Pets (ROMP), asked the Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Commission to establish at least one OLA in the county park system. County staff performed a thorough analysis of

key issues related to OLAs, such as site layout and design, signage, support facilities and maintenance, waste disposal, impacts on wildlife and vegetation, OLA rules, fees, and penalties and enforcement. Staff conducted a literature review on each key issue, documented their findings, and then applied them to the two pilot sites. In January 1997, the Parks Commission agreed to begin an 18-month pilot project with two designated OLAs.

In order to assess the effectiveness of the pilot project after the 18-month trial period, county staff established six evaluation criteria: number of users, public comments, natural resource impacts, reduction of illegal activity, costs, and comparisons to other jurisdictions.

The results of the assessment determined that the pilot program was a success and the county declared OLAs a legitimate recreational program. A new Off-Leash Area Administrative Policy was established with the goal of creating multiple OLAs throughout the community.

The policy evaluated geographic location with a detailed site assessment process that included using a team of OLA users and county staff. The characteristics of each potential sites, such as amenities and accessibility, were evaluated. The process included an estimate for the cost of developing each site, a development timeline, and a plan for implementation. Ramsey County chose to make the two pilot sites permanent and, in 2001, they added a third location. (Ramsey County Parks & Recreation, 2003)

Salt Lake City, Utah

The Salt Lake area is home to many hiking and outdoor activities including the popular Mill Creek Canyon area. Many of the activities pursued in the canyon allow for the accompaniment of dogs, both on and off-leash. Recently, increasing conflicts between off-leash dogs, other recreational activities, and wildlife forced the Salt Lake County Council to address the issue. Many Council members were adamantly opposed to the idea of banning off-leash activities altogether in the canyon and instead, came up with an innovative approach to limiting the conflicts. Through a County Ordinance, the Council declared it is "unlawful to possess an unleashed dog on even-numbered days in Mill Creek Canyon." As a result, dogs are allowed in Mill Creek Canyon everyday, but only off-leash every other day. (Salt Lake Tribune, 1997)

Tigard, Oregon

Potso Park OLA opened in June 2002 and is a 1.7 acre parcel on private, industrial land. The land is owned by Coe Manufacturing, who has agreed to an easement for the City of Tigard to use the site. Potso Park offers many amenities, including fencing, double gated entry, shaded picnic tables, and an area fenced only for small dogs. Park hours during the week begin after the last shift goes home from Coe Manufacturing at 4:30 and are all day on Saturday, Sunday and holidays.

The site was proposed and located by a group of off-leash proponents in Tigard, now known as the Dog Park Committee. With assistance from Tigard Parks, the group negotiated an agreement with the owners of Coe, which included a conditional use permit for the industrial land, a lease agreement, and tax exemption worth \$11,070 per

year (Leistner, 2002). The Parks Department spent \$7,000 to improve the site, which included \$4,000 for "farm" fencing.

As for maintenance, Parks staff is responsible for unlocking the area for the designated hours, mowing, picking up garbage, refilling the water tank and waste bag dispenser, and reseeding the grass. The volunteers, organized through the Committee, are heavily involved in litter pickup and maintain the notice board. To help with maintenance and improvements, there is a locked metal donation box for OLA users to donate money.

Tigard admits to experiencing similar enforcement and compliance problems as Portland. Steve Martin, Tigard P&R Parks and Ground Supervisor, says that peer pressure seems to work best. To Martin, it seems that the Dog Park Committee's strong sense of ownership for Tigard's OLAs and promotion of responsible dog ownership among users has helped make their off-leash parks successful (Leistner, 2003).



Welcome Sign at Tigard's Public/Private OLA



Small Dogs Safe Haven at Potso Park

F. Lessons for Portland

There are some important lessons Portland can learn from these examples. First, an official citywide off-leash policy is an important component of implementing OLAs. The policy written by San Francisco's Parks Department helps guide implementation efforts and provides a framework for dealing with the issue. San Francisco's efforts can also be commended for including extensive citizen feedback and participation in the policy development process. An official policy, such as San Francisco's, could provide better direction for the issue and would remove a lot of uncertainty that currently exists in Portland with regard to OLAs and could be the starting point for creating additional OLAs in Portland.

Second, Portland can look to Seattle for guidance in shaping a future off-leash program by looking to the successes they have enjoyed, including wide distribution of OLAs throughout the city, stability through an OLA fund, and stewardship agreements between Parks and local citizen organizations. Seattle has benefited from taking these steps and helped their OLAs evolve into places that dogs and dog owners can enjoy.

Vancouver offers some lessons about dispersion of OLHs and fenced OLAs throughout the city and its efficacy in reducing the concentration of dogs and lowering impacts on any given site. This "spreading the load" method has helped Vancouver meet the need by providing many opportunities for people to recreate legally with their dogs off-leash. Since most areas are OLHs, they do not require much initial capital investment. This notion of shared use has worked in Vancouver, and if combined with providing more fenced OLAs could also work for Portland.

The smaller case studies provide some innovative ways to implement OLA/OLHs. Tigard, Oregon is particularly interesting for partnering with a manufacturing company willing to exchange the use of their land for a tax exemption. Perhaps Portland could find additional lands for OLAs using this type of agreement. Also, Charlotte, North Carolina has found ways to fund OLAs through community donations and revenue from their "pooch pass." Even Salt Lake City's off-leash every other day policy shows innovation in dealing with the issue and suggests that being creative is important in problem solving efforts.

VI. Funding Alternatives

Funding for an off-leash program is required for the initial installation of off-leash sites, but also ongoing maintenance and site improvements. While estimates vary, an OLA installation can range from \$7,000-30,000, depending on the site and level of amenities (Potter, 5/5/03).

There are varying schools of thought about how OLAs should be funded. On the one hand, many believe that dog owners, as a tax-paying constituency, have the right to parkland and resources for off-leash amenities without contributing additional money or effort. Similar to playgrounds, baseball diamonds, soccer fields, and tennis courts, OLAs should be provided and maintained by public agencies. On the other hand, many oppose OLAs because they are a "new" recreational activity that may displace traditional park uses. It is for this reason that some believe OLAs should be funded by dog owners and should only be sited on newly acquired parklands.

As this section will illustrate, there are many ways to fund the installation and maintenance of OLAs, ranging from purely public to purely private options. The optimal approach may fall somewhere in the middle and utilize multiple strategies.

Public Funds

On the public end of the spectrum is a program similar to that in Vancouver, B.C. in which OLAs are solely provided and maintained by the City Parks Department. In this case, PP&R would use existing resources to install and maintain OLAs.

Given Portland's history and political climate, a fully publicly funded OLA program is unrealistic. Many Parks Departments in other cities are, at a minimum, providing OLA sites, but then soliciting private funds for improvements and maintenance.

An important lesson to consider from other city's experiences is that it is advantageous to look beyond the current stock of parkland to site OLAs. As Dewey Potter from Seattle Parks & Recreation advises, "Off-leash areas work best on properties acquired and operated for that purpose; that is, properties with no history or constituency" (Potter, 5/5/03). Indeed, a complete inventory of all land in Portland, especially vacant lots, publicly held vacant land, or utility property, must be conducted to explore all possibilities of finding space for OLAs.

Off-leash Area Fund

A highly successful funding mechanism used in other cities is the establishment of an 'Off-leash Area Fund.' This strategy ensures a dedicated source of revenue and continuous commitment to preserve an OLA program. An approach, similar to that in Seattle, would be for MCAC or PP&R to manage the fund, while the nonprofit organization provides input on how it should be spent. Such a fund can be supported by a number of sources:

Licensing Fee

Currently, the dog licensing fee is collected by MCAC and sent directly to the General Fund. Licensing revenues can be funneled to an OLA Fund and directed back to services for dog owners, such as the installation or improvement of OLAs. As an example, Seattle dedicates 10% of the licensing fee.

One problem with this strategy is that only approximately one-third of dog owners license their dogs. However, this low percentage may be because incentives are not in place – no enforcement of the penalties for not licensing and few rewards for licensing. If dog owners knew that at least a portion of the licensing fee was directly benefiting them through an OLA Fund, they might be more inclined to license their dogs.

Another issue to consider is that there may be some resistance to taking away revenue from the County General Fund, especially in today's budgetary climate. It will take cooperation between PP&R and MCAC, and also a policy change, which can be a lengthy process.

Direct Donation

An established OLA Fund should have the capability to accept private donations, either from individuals or corporate entities.

Off-leash Area User Fees

Many cities are experimenting with user fees for OLAs, mostly to help fund the maintenance and improvements for the sites. User fees vary from a suggested donation at a lock box, like in Tigard, Oregon, to a mandatory annual dog park pass, similar to what Charlotte, North Carolina is implementing.

User fees are somewhat controversial because, as stated earlier, many dog owners feel they have the right to OLAs and amenities. However, fees for maintenance seem to be increasingly found acceptable to dog owning communities around the country.

Nonprofit Organizations

Every American city that was examined for this study has a nonprofit, citizen group involved in the decision-making for OLAs, amenities, and improvements. Indeed, an active nonprofit is crucial to the implementation of an off-leash program.

The nonprofit can take on a variety of roles, including: "steward" of OLAs; "cooperative" that buys property and develops OLAs; and fundraiser for an OLA Fund. Initially, the nonprofit should focus on increasing its visibility in the community and increasing the number of dues-paying members, hosting or attending fundraising events to raise money. It is also important to coordinate efforts between existing nonprofit organizations (C-SPOT and Cadre Gold) and the various neighborhood associations and coalitions that have taken up the issue.

Private-Public Partnerships

The cases in which the private sector has played a role in OLAs have proven to be quite successful. The Tigard example is one such case where cooperation between private industry and a public agency led to the implementation of a popular, well-used OLA.

Another possibility is finding private sponsorship, perhaps by a corporation like Petco, a national pet supply chain. Both PP&R and NPOs could pursue private sector opportunities and make proposals to private entities for land or off-leash sponsorship. Also, the NPO should be willing to think beyond the neighborhood parks they are used to visiting. Many successful OLAs have been located on private lands and nontraditional park properties.

VII. Final Conclusions

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the research conducted for this project. First, the study found that OLAs are considered a legitimate activity and use of public lands, since they provide benefits to dogs, dog owners, and communities. It is for this reason that a broad range of citizens and organizations have an interest in seeing additional OLAs created in Portland. Also, the dog owning public in Portland is substantial and, given that many people are choosing to engage in off-leash activities with their dogs, it is sensible to provide an adequate number of places for this activity. OLAs are an important component of the solution for reducing the negative impacts of off-leash dogs and increasing the quality of our public spaces.

The GIS analysis highlighted the contention that the current level of OLA provision is inadequate to meet demand in terms of spatial distribution and quantity. The demand for OLAs is likely to vary throughout Portland; however, each city quadrant should have convenient access to an OLA to ensure fairness and to minimize concentrations of dogs in any given OLA.

Currently, a few trial OLAs have been sited and efforts have been initiated to resolve the issue. However, the process has been slow and has not moved forward systematically; there is great uncertainty as to if and when additional OLAs will be created. By turning over the recommendation and siting process to the neighborhood coalitions, PP&R is acknowledging the importance of public involvement in the decision-making process, but, without a citywide framework for guidance, the process is in danger of becoming inconsistent, inefficient and unfair.

In order to address the inertia of the current process, an improved decision-making process is warranted. The issue of dogs in parks and meeting the needs of an increasing number of dog owners in the city will not evaporate and will likely become more contentious if not dealt with in a timely manner. It is in the best interests of all stakeholders to work together to find solutions that everyone can live with.

VIII. Recommendations

A. Rational Decision-making Process

Citywide policy:

Developing a citywide off-leash policy is an important step in moving towards a rational decision-making process with regard to the issue. This would allow PP&R to take an official stance on dogs in the city and be explicit about their intentions. This would also remove much of the uncertainty that currently exists about the future of OLAs in Portland. Such a policy could establish an overarching framework for an OLA/OLH program and might identify where and how OLAs/OLHs are implemented and the roles and responsibilities.

Other important policy components include: standardized siting criteria, design and amenity standards, an OLA program monitoring process, and evaluation criteria for determining success or failure of OLAs and OLHs. As shown by the case studies, citizen input and review is an essential part of policy development to ensure that communities have a say in how the policy is shaped. The development of this policy could allow the process already underway with the neighborhood coalitions to proceed more systematically. It could also be instrumental in setting the foundation for innovative solutions, such as public/private partnerships or incentive programs for locating sites for OLAs.

Components of a rational decision making process could include a number of techniques that help determine how parks are being used and how facilities are distributed to meet the needs of all park users. This could be done by conducting citywide surveys, direct observations and spatial analysis that would inform the decision making process.

Survey:

Conducting a systematic, random survey of constituents would inform how and where OLAs should be sited. The survey conducted in this study was not scientific and the results cannot be extrapolated to the whole population. Never the less, the survey yielded very useful information. Interestingly, in a recent study done by the Trust for Public Land, the authors suggest a full-time employee be dedicated to surveying the public regarding allocation of parkland and park usage in order to ensure an excellent city park system (Harnick, 2003).

Park observations:

A comprehensive study of how parks are being used by the different recreation groups would further inform how parkland should be allocated in the future. In the small-scale observations conducted in this study, dog owners recreating with their dog off-leash was the second highest park activity, which supports the notion that there is a need for more areas to recreate. Again, the Trust for Public Land study clearly expresses the necessity of measuring how parks are being used by stating, "Having high usership is the ultimate validation that it is attractive and that it meets people's needs ... also to know users by location, by time of day, by activity and by demographics" (Harnick, 2003).

Spatial analysis:

A spatial analysis of where dog owners are located provides invaluable information for the decision-making process. Spatial equity for dog owners is important because park users should have access to park amenities that meet their needs. This does not necessarily mean an OLA within walking distance of every dog owner, however, geographic distribution throughout the city is beneficial in reducing impacts associated with OLAs.

B. Off-leash Area Program

Education

Measures to educate dog owners about responsible dog ownership were recommended in the past two dog task force reports, and we would also like to emphasize the important role education plays. An effective education program would reduce the number of dog-related conflicts that occur in public parks and open spaces. Recommendations include:

- Create informative brochures to educate dog owners about issues associated with off-leash dogs and general responsible dog ownership principles. The brochure would be provided to owners when they license their dog or adopt at the Humane Society. It could also be made available at OLAs, and be distributed by PP&R, MCAC, OLA advocacy groups and veterinarians.
- Improve educational signage and postings throughout the park system. Currently, signage in Portland parks concerning the leash and scoop laws and OLA locations are minimal (see picture). Additionally, designated wildlife areas, such as Oaks Bottom, do not have signs that educate dog owners about their potential impact on wildlife. Signs that are easy to read would be useful in educating dog owners about the impacts dogs can have on wildlife.
- Organize a symposium to discuss issues associated with OLAs and invite all of the stakeholders. Communication is vital in implementing an OLA program and a symposium could be the first step of opening communication lines. Such an event could be modeled after the "Canine Conundrum" Symposium held in Vancouver BC in May 2000. Agenda items could include:
 - Identification of stakeholders and their interests.
 - Seminars led by experts on related issues, such as natural resources and animal psychology.
 - Workshops held by people involved in successful programs in other cities.



Educational sign about spawning salmon the Marymoor OLA in Redmond, WA

Enforcement

Proper levels of enforcement of the leash and scoop laws are an integral part to successful implementation of OLAs. Enforcement as part of the OLA program strategy is necessary to encourage dog owners to recreate with their pets in a responsible and legal manner. Both public agencies and OLA advocacy groups are needed to improve the current level of enforcement. Increasing citations by the public agencies would be incentive for compliance and an opportunity for educational outreach. Additionally, the presence of advocacy groups and other responsible dog owners in parks provides the opportunity for enforcement through peer pressure.

Installation of OLAs

Additional OLAs are critical to the success of an OLA program. Therefore, it is highly recommended that PP&R provide an adequate level of service by designating OLAs throughout the city. Evidence from this study's data and case study findings indicates that OLAs can help reduce dog-related impacts and conflicts in parks. This is consistent with PP&R goals to support community and ensure safe parks for Portland citizens.

Implementation of OLAs should be appropriately dispersed throughout the city by following a clear and systematic process of demand analysis, installation, monitoring, and evaluation. OLAs should be considered important to the OLA program, and put in place immediately in parks with high off-leash usage prior to development of future OLAs sites.

Stewardship Agreements

Formal agreements between PP&R and the active citizen groups could serve two important functions. First, an agreement would clarify each party's roles and responsibilities in the implementation of an OLA program. Secondly, it could specifically outline the provision of stewardship and maintenance duties for the OLAs, as well those for education programs and fundraising activities. It is recommended that PP&R pursue stewardship agreements for each existing and future OLA site in the city, and designate a point person from PP&R to work with the citizen groups.

OLA Fund

An OLA Program will not survive without a dedicated source of revenue and therefore an OLA Fund must be established and supported by a combination of public and private dollars.

C. Mobilizing the community

Given that no political figure has taken up the issue of OLAs and the issue lacks a champion in government, one strategy for moving forward with the issue is to work on organizing and mobilizing the community to influence decision-making. Advocacy groups can begin this process by identifying common stakeholder interests. By doing this, advocacy and non-profit groups can partner with other groups and citizens to further the cause, perhaps engaging in educational campaigns to familiarize the public about the benefits of OLAs to communities. Mobilizing the community by creating broad-based support is important for influencing challenging political environments. As

the old adage states, "there is power in numbers," and the more people who understand the far-reaching benefits of OLAs, the better.

Building on the notion that influencing the political process is key to moving this issue forward, advocacy groups can engage in activities to enhance their image and garner favorable political support in the community. This can be done by mailings, articles in local newspapers, letters and other media outlets. Over time these activities can help decision makers and the public become more aware of advocacy groups, educate them about the issues and hopefully generate interest in championing the issue.



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Appendix

City of Portland Prior Reports and Recommendations on OLAs	Recommendation Status*	
	Initiated	Completed

"Dogs in Parks", by Oman/Jerrick Associates (1995) - Major analytical methods used: literature review, case studies of six cities, and an analysis of cost considerations.

Develop a comprehensive policy that addresses the problem system-wide.	X	
Keep a record of all complaints and comments.	X	
Develop signage regarding dog laws and guidelines for responsible behavior for installation in all parks.	X	
Develop a program to minimize dog waste and disposal problems.		
Continue to commit staff time to attend public meetings.	X	
Continue to provide dog ownership classes within Portland Parks recreation programs.		
Commit the necessary staff time and resources to identifying feasible ways to add enforcement capabilities specifically in parks.	X	X
Work with MCAC (Multnomah County Animal Control) to augment their enforcement resources.	X	X
Portland Parks should continue to solicit and cooperate with dog owners for their help in distributing appropriate information, patrolling parks, and promoting responsible ownership.	X	
Portland Parks should continue to pursue budgeting for Park Ranger Program.	X	X
Continue to support staff members in their enforcement authority.	X	X
Continue to solicit the Portland Police or the police reserve units for support and manpower, especially in problem parks and/or at peak use times.	X	X
There is a need for Portland Parks to work with the county and appropriate legal representatives in the court system to evaluate the adequacy of fines, fees, and penalties.	X	
A citizens task force should be formed to assist Portland Parks with a number of tasks related to dogs in parks.		
Solicit the participation of dog owner groups, and associated interest groups...in promoting, preparing, and distributing information on responsible dog ownership.	X	
Identify funding sources to support enforcement and education	X	
Requests to establish off-leash dog areas/hours...should be approached comprehensively in a system-wide analysis by the task force and Portland Parks.		
Site criteria should be established by Portland Parks		
Criteria for ongoing administration of dog facilities should be established along with site selection criteria.		
Prior to any permanent development or change in use test sites should be developed.	X	
Dog-oriented facilities within a park require a strong commitment of a supporting dog group to provide volunteer patrols, peer education, fund raising, and cleanups.		

"Off-Leash Areas In Portland" by Carole Aquino, Management Analyst, City of Portland (1999) - Major analytical methods used: literature review and informal site assessments.

Option 1: Institute an off leash area program that addresses citizens' needs on a city-wide, strategic basis.	X	
Option 2: 'No' off-leash policy	X	
Option 3: Off-leash hours		
Option 4: Incorporate Option 1 and Option 3		

City of Portland Prior Reports and Recommendations on OLAs	Recommendation Status*	
	Initiated	Completed

Task Force Recommendations" by Portland Citywide Off-leash Task Force (2000) - Major analytical methods used: literature review and evaluation of evidence from public testimony.

A five-year pilot project providing OLA's and OLH's	X	
Dog owners will help enforce rules	X	
Greater enforcement and education	X	X
More active participation by PP&R in siting and maintaining OLA's and providing OLH's	X	X
OLA's should be sited taking into account likely use and relative popularity	X	
PP&R may need to acquire access or ownership of additional space	X	X
Seek advice of neighborhood groups prior to final siting of OLA's and OLH's	X	X
PP&R will make a reasonable effort to establish two larger exclusive OLA's with greater amenities by January 1, 2001	X	
Provide 30-day notice to the public prior to a temporary closure and provide location of alternative sites	X	X
Establish criteria that state OLA's should be sited on a level area of at least 5,000 square feet and have no significant impact on fish and wildlife habitat or water quality, adjacent residential areas, away from playgrounds, close to parking, and in locations that encourage pedestrian travel	X	X
Amenities should include water, fencing, benches, signage, bags, trash cans, regular disposal, and environmental impact buffers	X	n/a
Costs should be covered by general fund appropriations and user fees		
An additional \$5 should be added to the dog license fee; these additional funds should be used exclusively for building and maintaining OLA's and enforcement and education	n/a - not within PP&R authority	
PP&R officials and MCAC will have authority to issue citations		
Enforcement must be significantly enhanced	X	X
PP&R must begin a comprehensive education effort	X	
Post laws and rules at all OLA's	X	
Post information on impact on wildlife and sensitive areas	X	
Partner with vets, clubs, and non-profits groups to undertake a comprehensive education plan for dog owners and potential dog owners through obedience classes, good dog ownership flyers, encouragement of public help in park clean up, dissemination of information on OLA's and OLH's	X	
During the five-year pilot project, a citizen advisory group of five persons appointed by the PP&R director will act as consultants on implementation		

*Note: Recommendations status as of June 2, 2003 per Evelyn Brenes, City of Portland

Methodologies

A. Survey

The survey was administered through a website located at: <http://home.attbi.com/~j.gilmour/>. The survey capabilities are a part of AT&T Broadband Cable services. The survey consisted of 28 questions for dog owners and 14 questions for dog owners and non-dog owners. Questions that specifically addressed current use of OLAs were not relevant to non-dog owners.

The goal was to get as many non-dog owners and dog owners to participate in the survey as possible. This was accomplished by spreading the word about the survey through links on other websites, emails to acquaintances and listserves, flyers in parks, coffee houses, grocery stores and word of mouth (see below). Additionally, C-SPOT assisted in conveying the website link through emails to their constituents and other listserves. The survey was available from April 21 to May 1.

The responses were downloaded into a comma delimited text file that was imported into database software for analysis. The team carefully screened the responses for multiple submissions from one person by removing duplicate names, times and answers. Results were analyzed in SPSS statistical.

Locations of survey announcements and flyers

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NE Portland Natures• NE Portland New Seasons• Fresh Pot coffee Shop• Gabriel Park• Metro	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• USP listserv• Red Lizard Running Board• Southwest Community Center• Bonneville Power Agency• US Geological Survey
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Limitations

The survey was not randomly administered so the information cannot be extrapolated to represent the City of Portland.

B. Direct Observations

Parks

A number of Parks were selected to conduct the direct observations and were divided among project team members. Visits occurred on different days and times chosen by each team member and each park was observed on three separate occasions. The observations were conducted over the months of April and May. An attempt was made to select a sample of parks representing each quadrant of the city. The parks selected are:

- Gabriel
- Hillsdale
- Irving
- Kelley Point
- Westmoreland
- Willamette
- Sellwood
- Oaks Bottom
- Woodstock
- Laurelhurst
- Mt. Tabor
- Wallace

To gather the data systematically, the project team developed an observation template (see appendix E) used to record the activities of dog owners and other users in the selected parks. Each observation took one-half hour to complete and involved walking around each park. Users were divided into individual categories such as people playing baseball or basketball, etc. and measured against each other, rather than lumping all organized sports participants together. The observations included the following elements:

- Date and time,
- Weather conditions,
- Number of people engaging in each activity,
- Number of dogs off-leash and on-leash,
- Number of people with dogs,
- Potential conflicts, such as dogs in playgrounds etc.,
- Park amenities, and
- Scooping and non-scooping incidences.

Off-leash Areas

Observations were also conducted at the four OLAs in Portland. For these observations the project team counted the number of dogs and dog owners present during the half hour period, conflicts and scooping behavior. Amenities at each OLA were also recorded. The OLAs are:

- East Delta
- West Delta
- Chimney
- Gabriel OLA

Limitations

Direct observations were not conducted in all of Portland public parks and were only over the course of three to four weeks during the months of April and May, not allowing for consideration of year-round activities and usage.

C. Spatial analysis

The spatial analysis was conducted using a variety of data sets. Multnomah County Animal Control supplied current licensed dog data that contained 66,960 dog owner addresses. Metro's RLIS data set was used for street locations, neighborhood boundaries, and other Portland specific geographic information. The main dataset used in the GIS analysis was derived by "geo-coding" the MCAC licensing information. This process allowed for the mapping and analysis of 47,908 licensed dogs in the City of Portland.

- **Neighborhood Counts**

The point locations for the dog owners were overlain with the *polygonal* neighborhood boundaries. The points that fell within each individual neighborhood were counted and summed. The result is a tally of licensed dog owners within each neighborhood.

(Datasets: RLIS neighborhood boundaries, MCAC dog ownership points)

- **Neighborhood Coalition Counts**

The neighborhood boundaries were aggregated together based on the coalition neighborhood memberships listed by Portland's Office of Neighborhood Involvement (ONI). The dog owner points were then overlain with the neighborhood coalition boundaries and counted. The result is a tally of licensed dog owners within each neighborhood coalition.

(Datasets: RLIS neighborhood boundaries, MCAC dog ownership points)

- **Owner Distances to Off-Leash Areas**

The parks currently containing off-leash areas were identified and the center point of their polygonal boundaries was calculated and extracted. Using a *distance* function in the GIS, the distance from every dog owner location to each of the four off-leash park center points was calculated. The distances calculated are straight line, and do not account for the extra distance traveled using transportation corridors

(Datasets: RLIS park boundaries, park centroids, MCAC dog ownership points)

- **Neighborhood Distances to Off-Leash Areas**

The center point of each polygonal neighborhood boundary was calculated and extracted. The distance from each neighborhood center point to each of the Off-Leash area center points was calculated. The distances calculated are straight line, and do not account for the extra distance traveled using transportation corridors.

(Datasets: RLIS park boundaries, park centroids, RLIS neighborhood boundaries, neighborhood centroids)

- **Neighborhood Dog Owing Densities**

Using the counts of dog ownership previously calculated, neighborhood dog owning densities were calculated by dividing the number of dog owners by the population of each neighborhood.

(Datasets: MCAC dog ownership points, RLIS neighborhood boundaries, Multnomah County neighborhood population)

- **General Density Clusters**

Using a "spatial analyst" extension in the GIS, a *density* function was applied to the dog owner point locations. The density function converts the points into a "raster" format, and then calculates the number of point locations within a specified distance. For our analysis, each cell of the tessellation was populated with number of dog owners found within ¼ mile of each cell. The product is a "surface" representing the density clusters of dogs and dog owners in Portland. (Datasets: MCAC dog ownership points)

- **Count of Dog Owners within ¼ Mile of Parks and Open Space**

The Portland parks and open space boundaries were buffered by ¼ mile. The dog owners were then overlain with the park buffer and counted. The result of the analysis is a count of the number of dogs within ¼ mile of each park and open space in Portland. (Note: Dog owners that were within a ¼ mile of more than one park were included in the count for each park.) (Datasets: MCAC dog ownership points, RLIS park boundaries)

Note: All of the GIS analysis was performed using the Environmental Systems Research Institutes (ESRI) ArcInfo package, and Microsoft's Excel.

Limitations

The process of "geo-coding" relies on the accuracy of the underlying data, in this case MCAC license database and RLIS street address codes. Errors of dog owner addresses in the MCAC data or inaccurate coding in the RLIS data set could exist.

Survey Questions

Respondent Name:

Respondent Email Address:

1. Do you own a dog?

- Yes**
- No**

2. What is your zip code?

3. How many people live in your household?

4. How many children under 18 live in your household?

5. How often do you use Portland Public Parks?

- Daily**
- Weekly**
- Monthly**
- Rarely**
- Never**

6. Do you feel there is a need for additional off-leash areas in Portland?

- Yes**
- No**
- Unsure**

7. Have you experienced conflicts with off-leash dogs in Portland Parks?

- Frequently**
- Rarely**
- Never**

Rate your level of agreement to the following statements 8-13.

8. I feel that designated off-leash areas/hours can help reduce conflicts between park users and off-leash dogs.

- Strongly agree**
- Agree**
- Unsure**
- Disagree**
- Strongly disagree**

9. I feel that designated off-leash areas/hours can help increase safety in Portland Parks.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

10. I feel that off-leash areas can contribute to a sense of community.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

11. I think off-leash dogs negatively impact wildlife.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

12. I think off-leash dogs negatively impact wildlife habitat.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

13. I think off-leash dogs negatively impact water quality.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

14. Do you think dogs should be allowed in wildlife areas?

- Yes
- Yes, only on leash
- No

15. Do you feel that existing leash and scoop laws are adequately enforced?

- Yes**
- No**
- Not familiar with these laws**

16. Do you feel that the Portland Department of Parks and Recreation has been responsive to your needs as a dog owner or non-dog owner with regard to off-leash areas?

- Yes**
- Somewhat**
- No**
- Unsure**

17. How should off-leash areas be funded?

- 100% public**
- 100% private**
- A combination of public and private sources**

18. Which of the following is your highest priority?

- Fenced off-leash areas**
- Designated OLHs**
- Off-leash trails**
- Other park amenities**
- None of the above**

Dog owners only

19. How many dogs do you own?

20. Where do you recreate with your dog off-leash most frequently?

- Designated off-leash area**
- Your yard**
- Hiking trails**
- Designated off leash area**
- I only recreate with my dog on leash**
- None of the above**

21. Which of the existing off-leash areas do you use most frequently?

- Gabriel
- East Delta
- West Delta
- Chimney
- I don't use them

22. Why do you/would you use off-leash areas with your dog?

- Recreation
- Socialization
- Safety for your dog
- Sense of community
- All of the above
- None of the above
- Don't care

23. If you had convenient access to a designated off-leash area, would you use it instead of a non-designated area?

- Yes
- Not sure
- No
- Already do

24. How far do you drive to an off-leash area? (in minutes)

25. In your opinion, what is a reasonable amount of time to drive to an off-leash area? (in minutes):

26. Would you prefer an off-leash area within walking distance of your principal residence?

- Yes
- No
- Don't care

27. Would you volunteer to help maintain an off-leash area?

- Yes
- No

28. Would you be willing to contribute money for establishing or maintaining additional off-leash areas in Portland?

- Yes**
- No**

-If yes, which way would you prefer to contribute?

- Direct donation**
- OLA user fee**
- Increased license fee**
- None of the above**

Web Survey Results

Question: How often do you visit Portland public parks?

Owner?	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Rarely	Never	Total
Dog owner	41.8%	37.8%	11.2%	8.8%	0.4%	249
Non dog owner	13.5%	54.8%	24.0%	7.7%	0.0%	104
Total	118	151	53	30	1	353

Statement: I think off-leash dogs negatively impact wildlife.

Owner?	Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Dog owner	7.2%	12.9%	21.3%	37.3%	20.9%	248
Non dog owner	23.1%	32.7%	20.2%	22.1%	1.0%	103
Total	42	66	74	116	53	351

Statement: I think off-leash dogs negatively impact wildlife habitat.

Owner?	Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Dog Owner	6.9%	15.0%	23.1%	37.2%	17.8%	247
Non dog owner	30.8%	37.5%	15.4%	16.3%	0.0%	104
Total	49	76	73	109	44	351

Statement: I think off-leash dogs negatively impact water quality.

Owner?	Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Dog owner	4.0%	11.3%	23.9%	35.2%	25.5%	247
Non dog owner	26.0%	27.9%	23.1%	22.1%	1.0%	104
Total	37	57	83	110	64	247

Question: Do you think dogs should be allowed in wildlife areas?

Owner?	Yes	No	Yes, only on leash	Total
Dog owner	32.8%	9.4%	57.8%	244
Non dog owner	9.7%	44.7%	44.7%	103
Total	90	69	187	347

Appendix D

Question: Do you feel that the Portland Department of Parks and Recreation has been responsive to your needs as a dog owner or non-dog owner with regard to off-leash areas?

Owner?	Yes	Somewhat	No	Unsure	Total
Dog owner	8.1%	30.5%	43.5%	17.9%	246
Non dog owner	4.9%	19.6%	37.3%	38.2%	102
Total	25	95	145	83	348

Question: What is your highest priority?

Owner?	Designated OLHs	Fenced OLAs	Off-leash trails	Other park amenities	None of the above	Total
Dog owner	12.5%	46.4%	29.8%	4.4%	6.9%	248
Non dog owner	6.7%	35.9%	4.9%	36.9%	15.5%	103
Total	38	152	79	49	33	351

Question: Where do you recreate with your dog off-leash most frequently?

Responses	Percent of total
Public Park	34.9
Your yard	30.1
Hiking trails	12.9
Designated off-leash area	12.0
Only on leash	6.0
None of the above	4.0
Total	249

Question: Why do you/would you use off-leash areas with your dog?

Response	Percent of total
All of the above	59.4
Recreation	16.9
Socialization	10.8
None of the above	6.0
Safety for your dog	4.8
Sense of community	1.2
Don't Care	0.4
Total	248

Appendix D

Question: If you had convenient access to a designated off-leash area, would you use it instead of a non-designated area?

Response	Percent of total
Yes	74.3
Not sure	11.6
No	7.2
Already do	6.8
Total	249

Question: Would you volunteer to help maintain an off-leash area?

Response	Percent of total
Yes	75.1
No	24.1
Total	247

Question: Would you be willing to contribute money for establishing or maintaining additional off-leash areas in Portland?

Response	Percent of total
Yes	77.9
No	21.7
Total	248

Question: If yes, which way would you prefer to contribute?

Response	Percent
Direct donation	30.9
OLA user fee	29.7
Increased license fee	19.3
None of the above	4.0
Total	209

Park: _____ Time Visited: _____

Date: _____ Weather Conditions: _____

Park Profile: What are the Park amenities?

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Softball / Baseball | <input type="checkbox"/> Off Leash Area | <input type="checkbox"/> Trails |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basketball | <input type="checkbox"/> Playground | <input type="checkbox"/> Adult exercise area |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis | <input type="checkbox"/> Volleyball | <input type="checkbox"/> Dog waste bags |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | | |

Dogs: How many dog-owners and dogs are in the park?

Dogs on leash;
Total: _____

Dogs off leash;
Total: _____

People recreating with dogs;
Total: _____

People to dog ratio: _____

Scooping incidences: Are owners picking up after their dogs?

Scoop;
Total: _____

No Scoop;
Total: _____

Potential conflicts:

Dogs in playgrounds;

Total: _____

Off leash dogs approaching other park recreaters;

Total: _____

Dogs chasing wildlife;

Total: _____

Other park users: Who else is using the park? (Write notes on back of page)

Activity	Number of users
Softball / Baseball	
Playground	
Basketball	
Tennis	
Volleyball	
Bicyclists	
Joggers / walkers (not with dogs)	
Other exercisers	
Other leisure (frisbee, picnic hangin')	

Off leash areas

of dogs;

Total: _____

of people;

Total: _____

People to dogs ratio: _____

Scoop;

Total: _____

No Scoop;

Total: _____

Amenities;

___ Seating

___ Water for people

___ Covered area

___ Water for dogs

___ Fence

___ Lighting

Any conflicts? _____

Anything else? _____

Park Observation Results

Table F.1: Total number of recreaters in all parks combined along with the percent of total recreaters for each category

Activity	Percent of total
Dogs on leash	4.3
Off-leash	11.2
Dog total	15.5
Dog Owners	15.9
Softball/baseball	12.5
Playground	0.6
Basketball	5.2
Tennis	2.1
Volleyball	0.2
Bicyclists	3.2
Joggers/walkers	8.8
Other exercisers	3.9
Other leisure	16.7
Total Dogs	3256

Table F.2: Number of potential conflicts between dogs and other park users with the percent of total dogs in each category

Incidences	Percent of total dogs
Dogs in playgrounds	4
Approach other users	3.2
Chase wildlife	0.8
Total dogs	504

Table F.3: Total number of dog owners and dogs for all OLAs with the percent of total each park had of the total number

OLA	Number of dogs	Number of dog owners	Percent of total Dog owners
E. Delta	38	44	38.9
W. Delta	3	2	1.8
Chimney	13	9	8.0
Gabriel	52	58	51.3
OLA Total	106	113	100.0

Table F.4: Average number of dogs per park

Park	Average # of dogs
Gabriel	40
Mt. Tabor	28
Laurelhurst	21
Irving	14
Kelley Point	13
Willamette	12
Sellwood	10
Wallace	9
Hillsdale	7
Westmoreland	7
Woodstock	7
Oaks Bottom	3

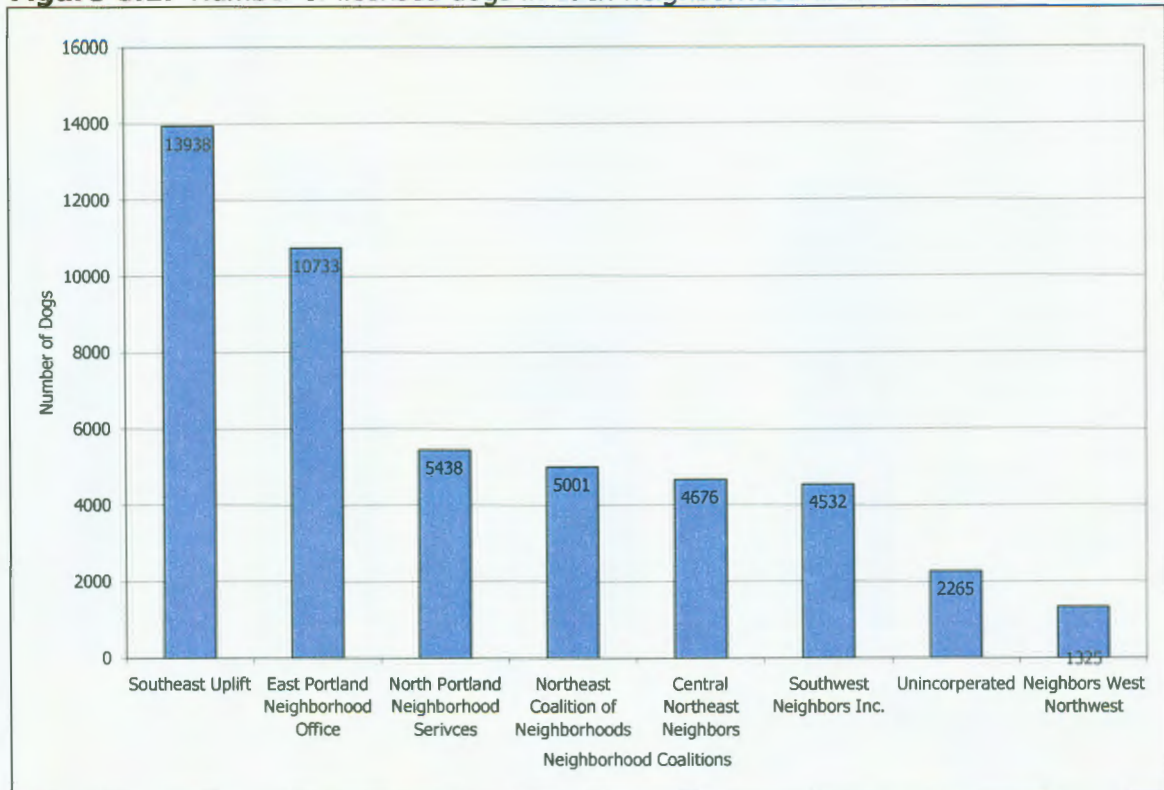
Limitations

Direct observations were not conducted in all of Portland’s public parks and were only over the course of three to four weeks, not capturing year round activities and usage.

Spatial Analysis Results

- **Neighborhood Coalition Counts**

Figure G.1: Number of licensed dogs in each neighborhood coalition.

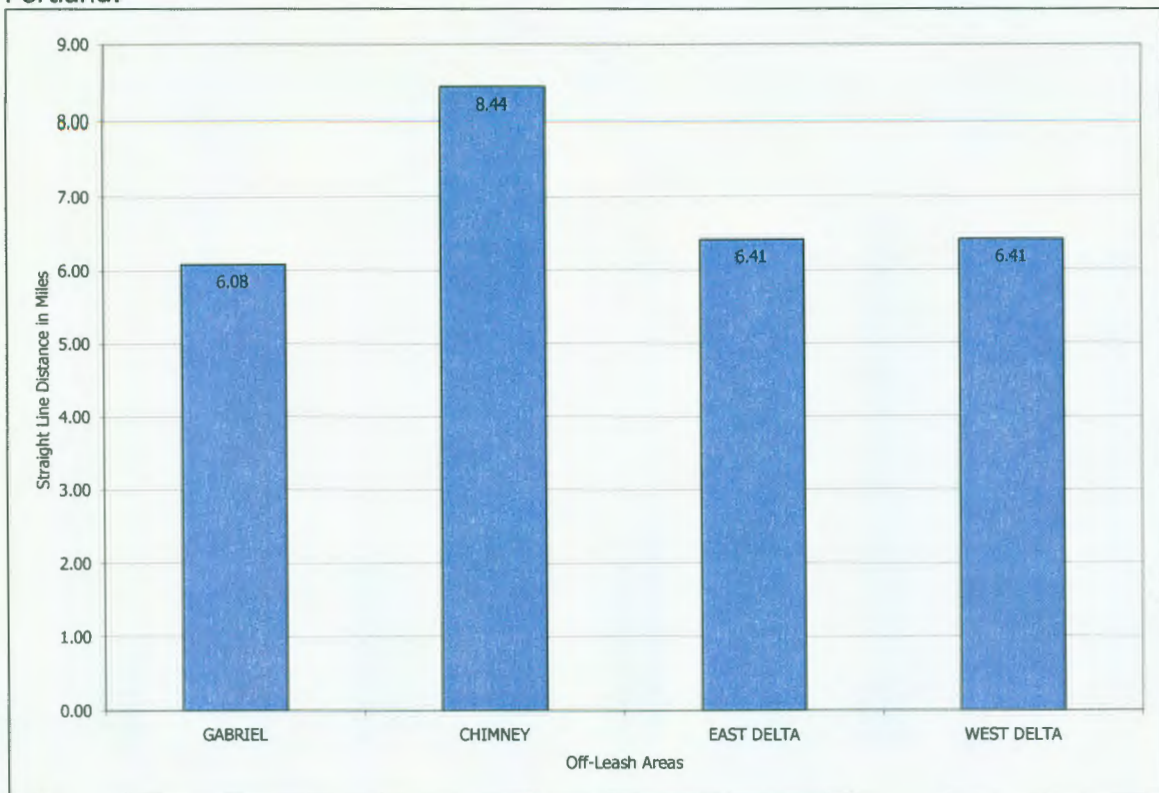


- **Neighborhood Distances to Off-Leash Areas**

Table G.1: Summary statistics for the straight-line distance between neighborhood centroids to designated off-leash areas.

Statistic	Chimney	Gabriel	West Delta	East Delta
Average distance	8.50	6.13	6.46	6.46
Median	8.60	6.29	6.42	6.14
Minimum	0.99	0.68	0.27	0.54
Maximum	15.27	12.05	12.29	11.88
Standard deviation	3.27	2.80	2.87	2.83

Figure G.2: Average distance of neighborhoods to designated off-leash areas in Portland.



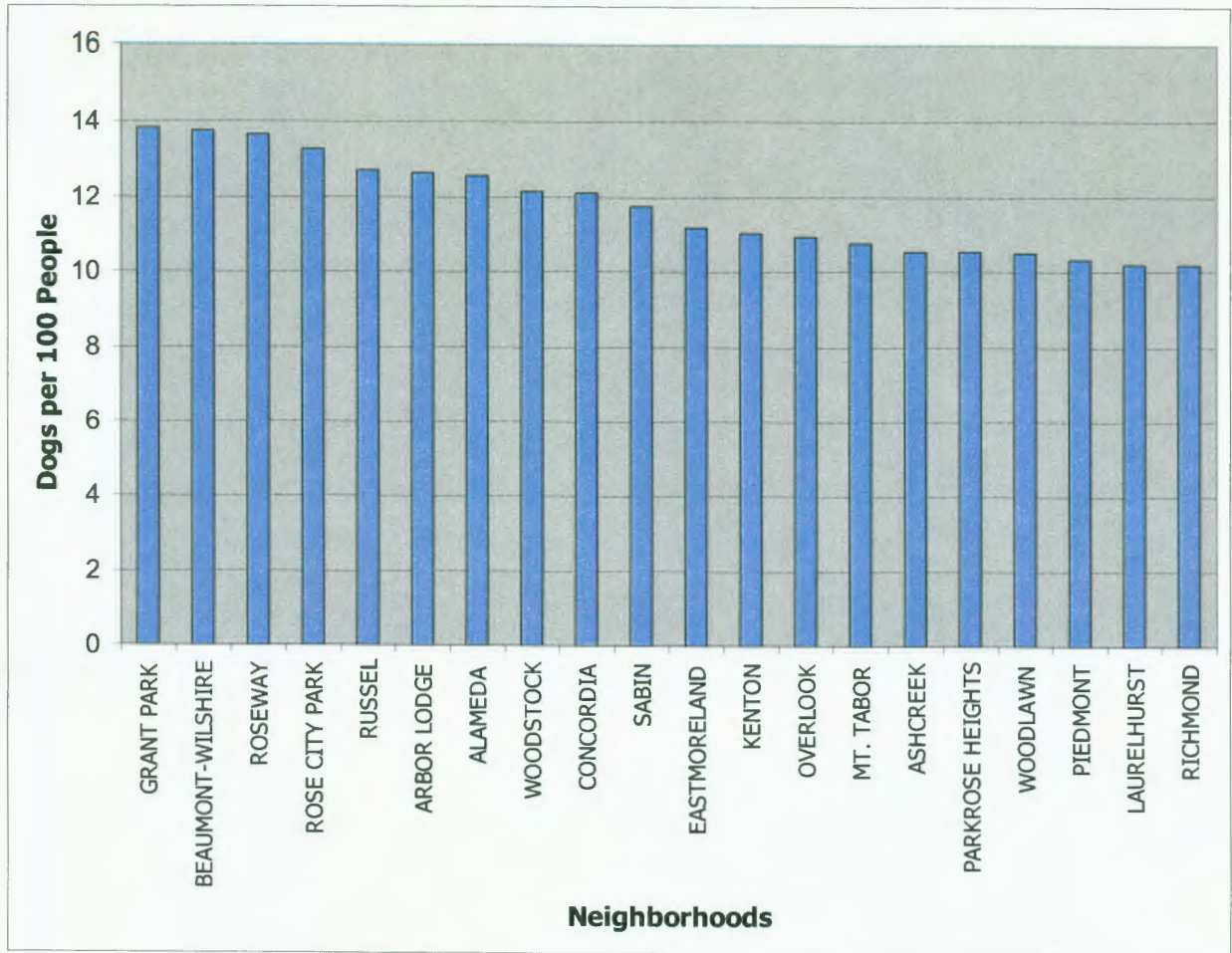
- Neighborhood Counts**

Table G.2: Top 20 Licensed Dog Neighborhoods and their Distance to Existing Off-leash Areas

NEIGHBORHOOD	DOG COUNT	GABRIEL	CHIMNEY	EAST DELTA	WEST DELTA
CENTENNIAL	2091	10.97	14.40	10.89	11.37
HAZELWOOD	1729	10.19	13.04	9.50	9.99
POWELLHURST GILBERT	1705	8.50	13.04	9.88	10.20
MONTAVILLA	1540	7.56	10.57	7.32	7.66
LENTS	1403	7.58	12.91	10.00	10.22
BRENTWOOD-DARLINGTON	1353	5.94	12.33	9.83	9.91
CULLY	1288	8.48	8.34	4.70	5.24
ROSE CITY PARK	1182	7.13	8.81	5.55	5.88
SELLWOOD MORELAND	1180	3.28	10.59	8.80	8.66
CONCORDIA	1156	7.71	6.75	3.25	3.69
RICHMOND	1151	5.21	9.66	7.08	7.16
MT. TABOR	1078	6.53	10.05	7.05	7.29
WOODSTOCK	1027	5.24	11.47	9.07	9.11
ST. JOHNS	979	10.14	0.99	3.52	2.97
MT. SCOTT	887	6.31	11.77	9.06	9.21
ROSEWAY	845	8.24	9.18	5.65	6.12
ARBOR LODGE	765	6.95	3.99	1.96	1.57
KENTON	764	8.51	2.86	1.07	0.27
BEAUMONT-WILSHIRE	705	7.10	7.67	4.37	4.71
FOSTER-POWELL	700	6.18	11.31	8.56	8.72

- **Neighborhood Dog Owning Densities**

Figure G.3: Top twenty dog owning neighborhoods with population over 3000.



Maps

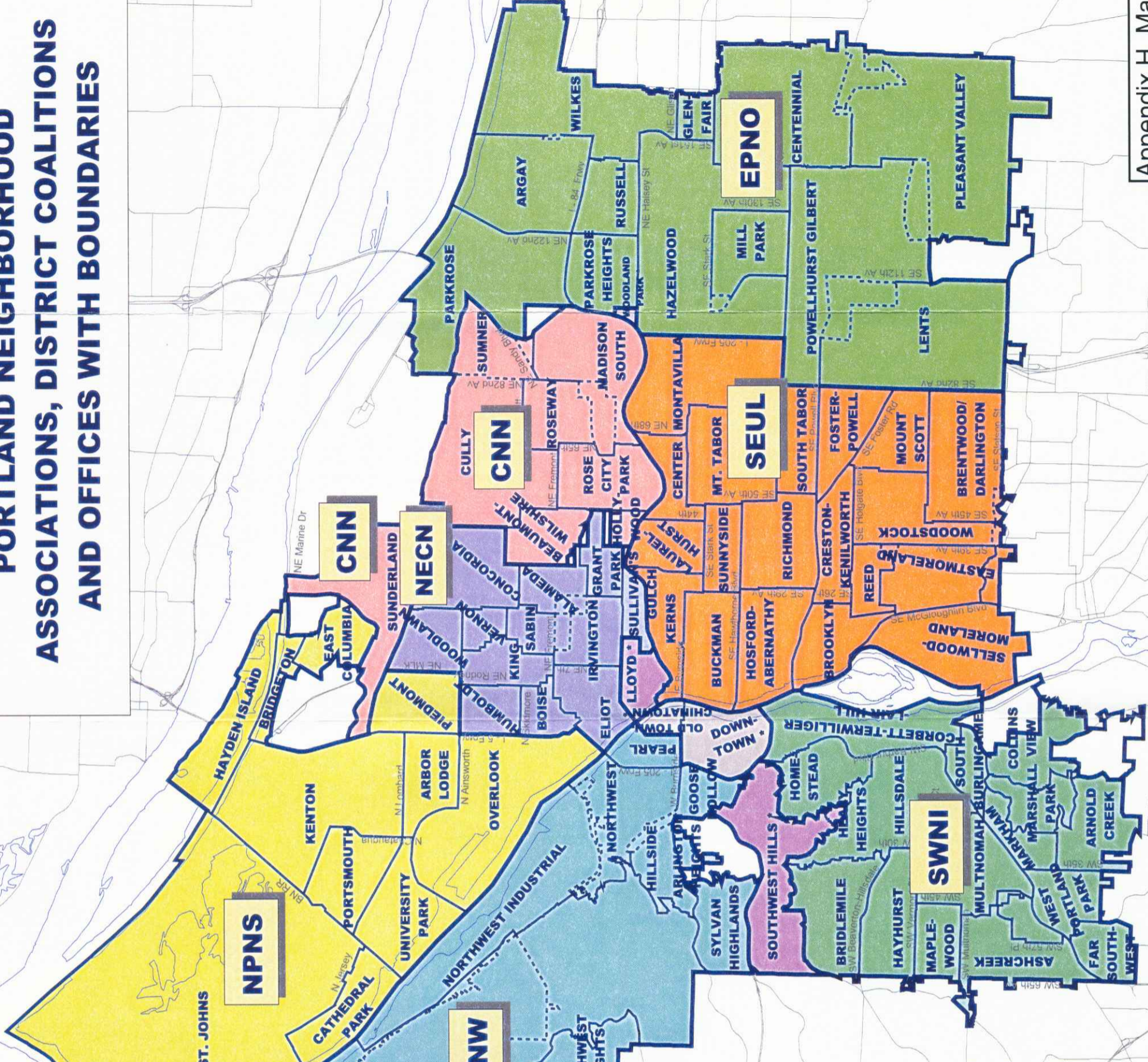
Map 1: Portland Neighborhood Associations, District Coalitions and Offices with Boundaries

Map 2: Current Off-Leash Areas shown with Portland Parks and Open Space

Map 3: Distance to Designated Off-Leash Areas

Map 4: Dogs within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of Portland City Parks Shown with Dog Distribution Density

PORTLAND NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS, DISTRICT COALITIONS AND OFFICES WITH BOUNDARIES



Neighborhood Associations

- Overlapping Boundary
- Neighborhood Boundary
- District Coalitions
- District Coalitions
- Association for Portland Progress
- Central Northeast Neighbors
- East Portland Neighborhood Office
- Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods
- North Portland Neighborhood Services
- Southeast Uplift Neighborhood Program
- Southwest Neighbors, Inc.
- Neighbors West/Northwest
- Recognized but non-affiliated
- Unclaimed Area

*** Recognized but non-affiliated with a coalition (Non-Coalition)**

INFORMATION SOURCES:

Neighborhood Association Boundaries:
Originally digitized by Portland Department of Transportation.
Updated by Bureau of Planning for Office of Neighborhood Involvement, June 2001. Registered to taxlot base maps.

All data compiled from source materials at different scales.
For more detail, please refer to the source materials or City of Portland, Office of Neighborhood Involvement.

City of Portland

Appendix H. Map 2.

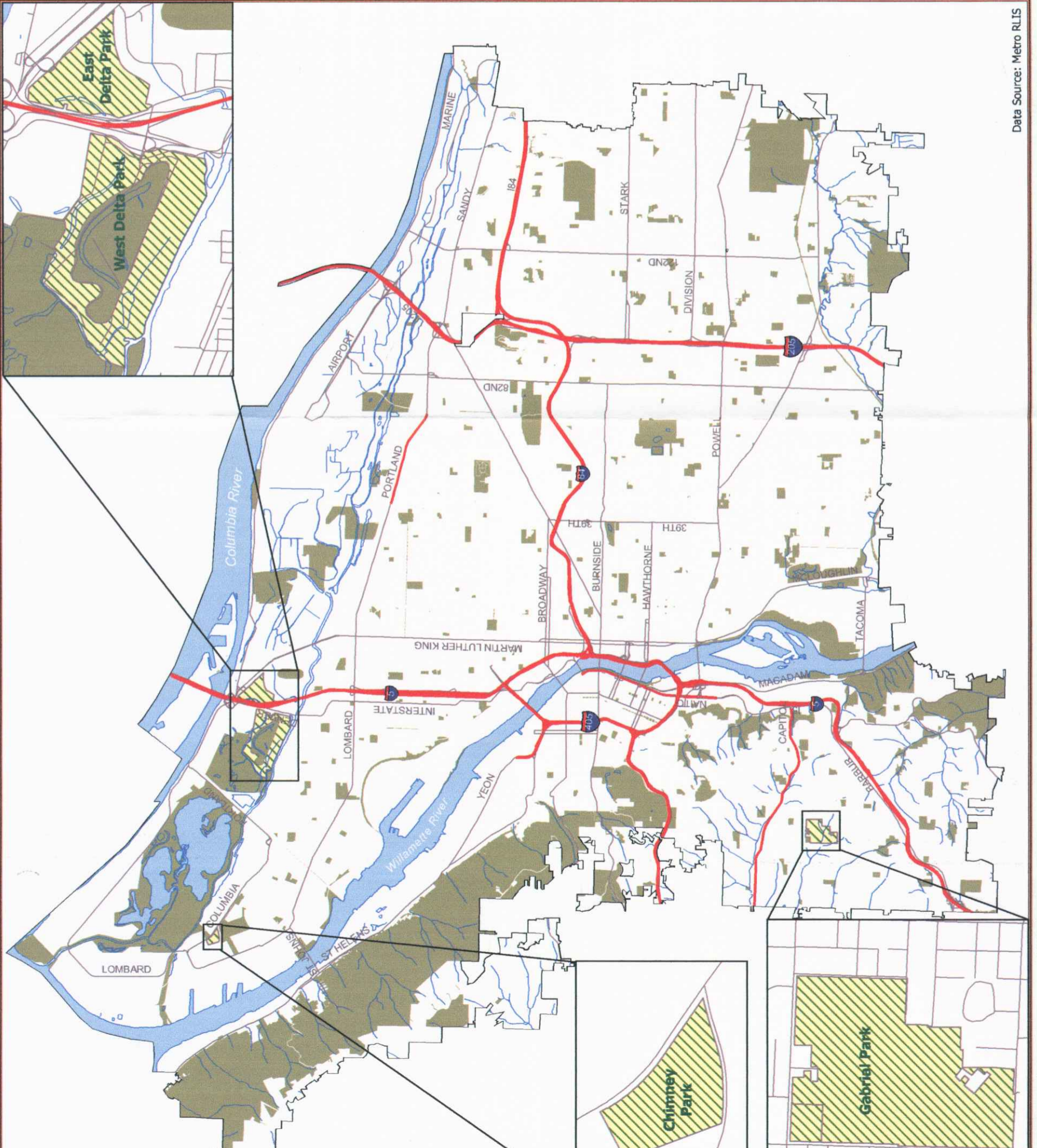
Current Off-Leash Areas shown with Portland Parks and Open Space and Open Space

LEGEND

- Portland Parks and Open Space
- Parks Offering Off-Leash Areas



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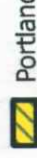
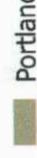
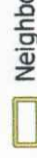
Data Source: Metro RLIS

City of Portland










Distance to Designated Off-Leash Areas

Appendix H. Map 3.

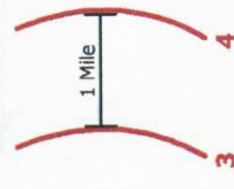
LEGEND

-  Portland Parks Offering Off-Leash Areas
-  Portland Parks
-  Neighborhood Boundaries

Dogs per 1/4 Mile.

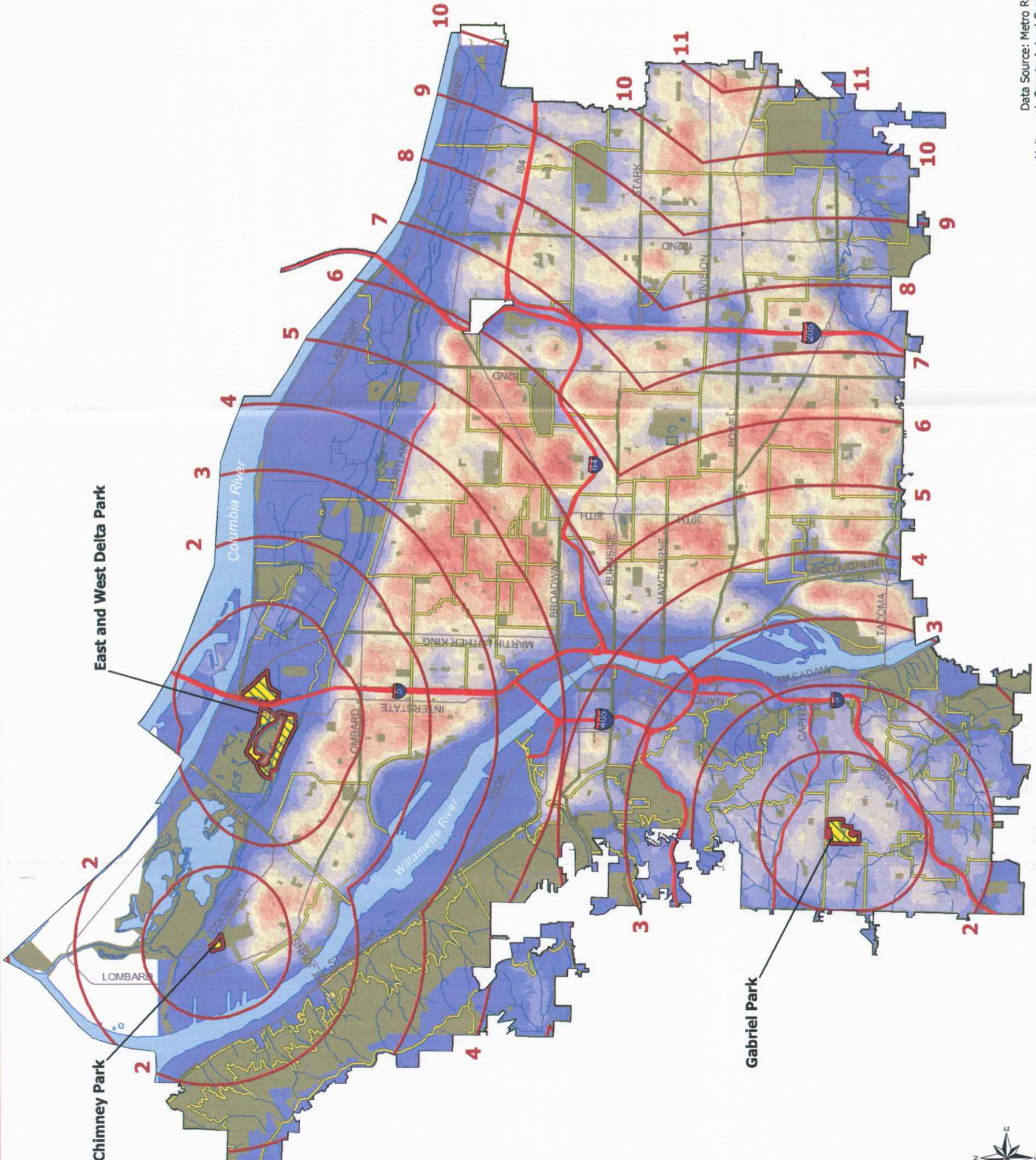
-  0 - 30
-  31 - 60
-  61 - 90
-  91 - 120
-  121 - 150
-  151 - 180
-  181 - 210
-  211 - 240
-  241 - 270

Straight Line Distance to Nearest Off-Leash Area in Miles.



Notes: The density surface displayed on the map was derived by first creating a 100 x 100 sq./ft grid for the City of Portland, and then calculating the number of dogs within a 1/4 mile radius of every grid cell.

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Data Source: Metro RLIS
Multnomah County Animal Control





City of Portland

Appendix H. Map 4.










Dogs within 1/4 Mile of Portland Parks and Open Space Shown with Distribution Density

LEGEND

-  Portland Parks Offering Off-Leash Areas
-  Dogs within 1/4 Mile of Portland Parks

-  0 - 59
-  60 - 136
-  137 - 225
-  226 - 433
-  434 - 741

1/4 Mile Dog Density

-  0 - 30
-  31 - 60
-  61 - 90
-  91 - 120
-  121 - 150
-  151 - 180
-  181 - 210
-  211 - 240
-  241 - 270

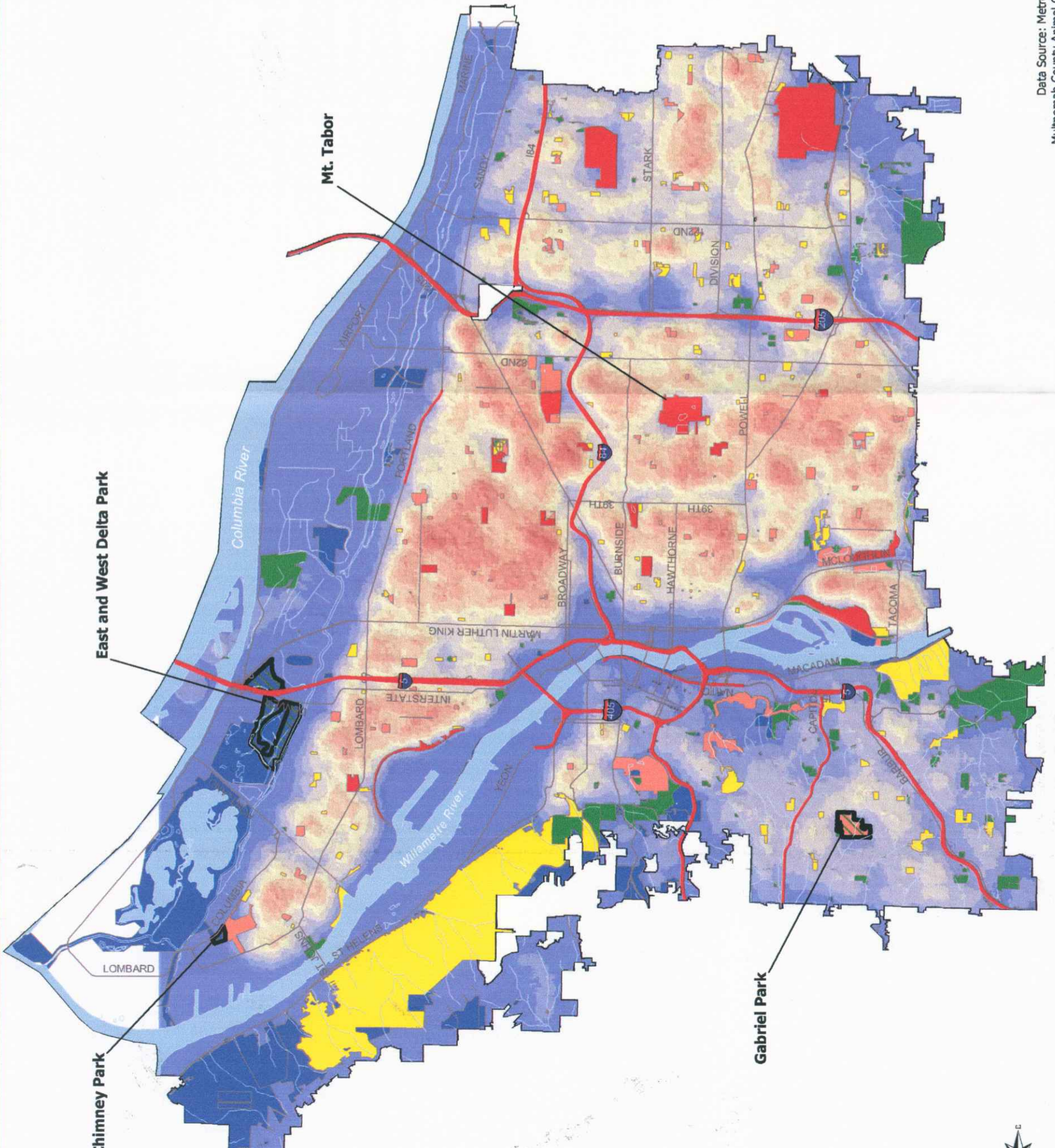


Notes: The density values were derived by first creating a 100x100 ft. grid of the City of Portland, and then calculating the number of dogs within 1/4 mile radius of each cell.

Notes: The values were derived by buffering each park, and calculating the number of licensed dogs within the 1/4 mile buffer.

Data Classes: The method used identifies breakpoints between classes using a statistical formula (Jenks optimization). This method is rather complex, but basically the Jenks method minimizes the sum of the variance within each of the classes. Natural Breaks finds groupings and patterns inherent in the data.

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Data Source: Metro RLIS
Multnomah County Animal Control