

**CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM**  
CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON

**AGENDA TITLE:** Off-Leash Dog Area Monitoring Report &  
Ordinance to make Off-Leash Area permanent  
**DEPARTMENT:** Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services (PRCS)  
**PRESENTED BY:** Dick Deal, Director PRCS  
Maureen Colaizzi, Parks Project Coordinator

**PROBLEM/ISSUE STATEMENT:**

On April 13, 2009, the City Council adopted an off-leash dog park pilot program for designated portions of Shoreview Park and Richmond Beach Saltwater Park. The pilot program expires on March 31, 2010. This staff report provides Council with a report on the implementation and ongoing progress of the Shoreview and Saltwater Park Off-Leash Dog Area pilot sites. Monitoring the sites during the pilot period has provided the City with enough information to recommend these sites for permanent use. This staff report recommends amending Section 8.12.280 of the Shoreline Municipal Code in order to make these off-leash dog parks permanent.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

The 2006 Parks and Open Space Bond funded the construction the off-leash dog areas. The PRCS Departments operating budget funds the ongoing maintenance and operations of the off-leash areas. Approximately \$7,500 is spent annually to pay for trash removal, dog waste bag replacement, maintaining the off-leash area surface and to provide a temporary restroom at Shoreview Park.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends amending Section 8.12.280 of the Shoreline Municipal Code in order to make these off-leash dog parks permanent. Ordinance No. 573 permanently establishes those designated portions of Shoreview Park and Richmond Beach Saltwater Park as off-leash dog parks, subject to the following:

- a) Dogs are allowed to be off-leash in the dog parks only during the posted hours of operation.
- b) Dogs in off-leash areas must be accompanied by their owner or handler, be under voice control and not cause a public nuisance, safety hazard or harass people, other dogs or wildlife.
- c) Owners and handlers bringing dogs into the off-leash area must follow posted rules.

Approved By: City Manager *Jm* City Attorney \_\_\_\_

## **BACKGROUND:**

### **Off-Leash Dog Area Pilot Sites**

During the pilot period the City has not experienced any social or environmental changes that resulted in measurable adverse effects to either site. The City has applied adaptive management measures to manage and maintain the sites. The City has worked with dog off-leash area supporters and user groups to increase education, social behavior and site management. The City has taken reasonable actions to provide well-maintained and well functioning dog off-leash areas that preserve the Saltwater Park marine shoreline ecological health and functions and forest habitat in Shoreview Park.

### **Richmond Beach Saltwater Park**

The 1.2-acre beach area south of the pedestrian bridge (See Exhibit A) was adapted for an unfenced, seasonal timed-use site (November 1-March 15 during normal park hours-dawn to dusk) to avoid the heavy park public use that occurs during warm weather times. The south beach area is one of the few public sites in Shoreline that offer water access. The site is bordered by Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) property to the east and south and Puget Sound to the west. The site was open to the public on November 1, 2009. The site includes a kiosk with posted rules and hours of operation, dog waste bag dispenser, trash receptacles, white boundary markers to the north and property boundary signage to the south. A public restroom building exists at the beach. The white boundary markers have received some vandalism during the pilot period. Staff has reinstalled the markers and added additional signage to better delineate where dogs are allowed off-leash and where they are required to be on-leash at the beach.

### **Shoreview Park**

This 2.5-acre site is located adjacent to Shoreline Community College (SCC) in Shoreview Park. For several years the site was used as an unauthorized student parking lot until September 2007. The use for SCC student parking was not in accordance with the recreational use identified by the park funding agencies. The use of the lot for SCC use had to be terminated. Now the site is adapted as an off-leash dog area (See Exhibit B). The Shoreview Off-Leash Area was dedicated and opened to the public on April 24, 2009. The site includes two gated entries, a small shy dog area, kiosk with posted rules and hours of operation, a portable restroom, benches and dog waste bag dispensers.

The site has two entry points with walk-in access from the lower Shoreview parking lot and vehicle access through SCC property. The site was easily modified as a traditional off-leash area. Staff has worked with the SCC to provide a right of access agreement to allow for vehicle access to the site from the College. In addition, the City has contracted with the SCC security to provide gate opening and closing. Posted hours of operation for vehicle access was set Monday-Friday from 1:00p.m. until dusk and on weekends from 9:00a.m. until dusk. Pedestrian access is permitted during normal park hours (daily dawn-dusk). The site remains in good condition, with limited vandalism or wear during the first year of off-leash use.

### **Volunteer Assistance**

The volunteer organization, ShoreDog, has organized several work parties to assist the City with routine maintenance. They have notified staff when they have seen any signs of wear or vandalism. This has allowed staff to correct issues immediately. The group has maintained the perimeter of the Shoreview site from blackberry encroachment, replaced dog waste bags and provided additional dog waste pick-up. ShoreDog also volunteered to make sure the beach area was scanned for possible dog waste before the Christmas Ship event in December at Saltwater Park. ShoreDog has reported that during their cleaning events, that sites are already exceptionally clean during their dog waste scans.

### **Public Information and Input during Monitoring Period**

#### **Public Information**

The City's website has a full page dedicated to the off-leash areas and includes maps, directions, hours-of-operation for sites, rules, leash law enforcement and licensing information. In addition, staff is in the process of creating a one-page flyer that will be posted at several city facilities.

Several articles were published in *Currents* to announce the opening of the off-leash areas that also included information about leash law enforcement and obeying the rules of the sites. The "Enterprise" also published articles about the opening of the off-leash areas.

#### **Public Input**

The City has received few complaints about the off-leash areas. Some concerns received were about posted vehicular hours of operation at the Shoreview Off-Leash Area. The 1:00p.m. opening was set by SCC to avoid peak student traffic times when students might be seeking the off-leash area for parking and when traffic counts on campus were highest. The 1:00p.m. opening has eliminated the concern that students would use the off-leash area for campus parking. During the summer, the SCC renovated a campus building adjacent to the entry of the off-leash area. The off-leash area entry gate was closed during some days in the summer because of the construction. Pedestrian access at this location was accommodated. Vehicles were permitted to park on campus parking areas.

We received some comments that the boundaries of the off-leash area at Richmond Beach Saltwater Park are unclear. The white boundary markers have received some vandalism during the pilot period. Many of them have been cut off at the base. Staff has reinstalled the markers and added additional signage to better delineate areas that allow off-leash and areas that require dogs be on-leash.. Next year, the City will increase the signage and public education about the boundaries.

In general, the number of electronic and telephone complaints about illegal off-leash dog activity in our park system have decreased since the off-leash areas were created.

### **Environmental Reporting**

To create a baseline for understanding the existing environmental conditions at Richmond Beach Saltwater Park, a water quality sampling program was conducted for an entire year before opening the off-leash area. This sampling program will continue until the end of 2010 to create a continuum of data for monitoring water quality. Samples were pulled monthly at one location in the water at the south area of the beach and at the north end of the beach. There has been no increase in bacteria levels at either location since installing the off-leash area in November.

The City's Storm Utility monitors Boeing Creek and Hidden Lake as part of their standard practice for monitoring water quality in the City. Every year, the South Boeing Creek is sampled monthly and Hidden Lake is sampled weekly from May-September. The only times when quality has exceeded healthy bacteria levels has been when sampling has occurred after significant storm events. Since opening the Shoreview Off-Leash Area, no significant changes in water quality have been noted at either Hidden Lake or Boeing Creek.

### **Future Off-Leash Areas**

In an effort to create a system of off-leash sites that meets the geographic needs of the community, staff continues to look for other potential sites. Staff anticipates recommending a potential site on the east side of Shoreline in the future.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

The 2006 Parks and Open Space Bond funded the construction the off-leash dog areas. The PRCS Departments operating budget funds the ongoing maintenance and operations of the off-leash areas. Approximately \$7,500 is spent annually to pay for trash removal, dog waste bag replacement, maintaining the off-leash area surface and to provide a temporary restroom at Shoreview Park.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends amending Section 8.12.280 of the Shoreline Municipal Code in order to make these off-leash dog parks permanent. Ordinance No. 573 permanently establishes those designated portions of Shoreview Park and Richmond Beach Saltwater Park as off-leash dog parks, subject to the following:

- a) Dogs are allowed to be off-leash in the dog parks only during the posted hours of operation.
- b) Dogs in off-leash areas must be accompanied by their owner or handler, be under voice control and not cause a public nuisance, safety hazard or harass people, other dogs or wildlife.
- c) Owners and handlers bringing dogs into the off-leash area must follow posted rules.

Approved By: City Manager *JM* City Attorney \_\_\_\_

### **Attachments**

Exhibit A: Shoreview Park

Exhibit B: Saltwater Park

## ORDINANCE NO. 573

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON, PERMANENTLY ESTABLISHING OFF-LEASH DOG PARKS IN SHOREVIEW PARK AND RICHMOND BEACH SALTWATER PARK; AND AMENDING SHORELINE MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER 8.12.**

WHEREAS, on April 13, 2009, the City Council established a pilot program for off-leash dog parks in designated portions of Shoreview Park and Richmond Beach Saltwater Park; and

WHEREAS, the pilot program expires March 31, 2010; and

WHEREAS, the City Council desires to permanently designate those portions of Shoreview Park and Richmond Beach as off-leash dog parks.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON, DO ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:**

**Section 1. Amendment.** SMC 8.12.280 is amended as follows:

8.12.280 Pets in city park facilities.

A. Dogs, pets, or domestic animals are not permitted on any designated beach, picnic area, tennis courts or play area in any park or in any building unless specifically permitted by posting. This section shall not apply to animal guides.

B. In posted areas, dogs or other pets or domestic animals must be kept on a leash no greater than 15 feet in length, and under control at all times.

C. Any person whose dog or other pet is in any city park area shall be responsible for the conduct of the animal and for removing feces deposited by such animal from the park area.

D. Notwithstanding section (B), dogs may be walked or exercised off-leash in that portion of Shoreview Park depicted on Exhibit A and in that portion of Richmond Beach Saltwater Park depicted on Exhibit B only during the posted hours of operation.

1. Dogs in off-leash areas must be accompanied by their owner or handler, be under voice control and not cause a public nuisance, safety hazard or harass people, other dogs or wildlife.

2. Owners and handlers bringing dogs into the off-leash area must follow posted rules.

**Section 2. Publication, Effective Dates.** This ordinance shall take effect and be in full force five days after passage and publication of a summary consisting of the title.

**PASSED BY THE CITY COUNCIL ON MARCH 8, 2010.**

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Mayor Keith McGlashan

**ATTEST:**

**APPROVED AS TO FORM:**

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Scott Passey  
City Clerk

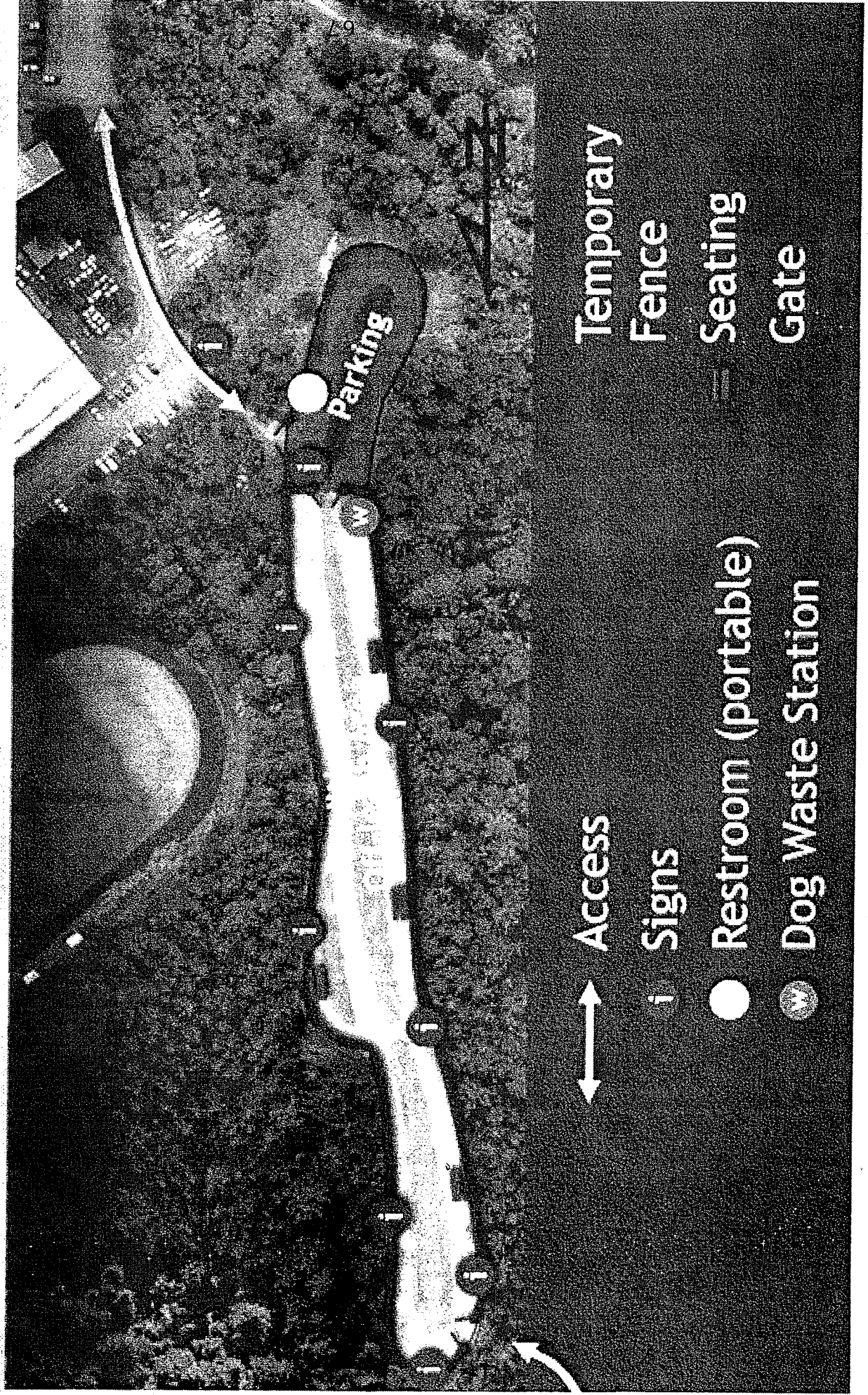
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ian Sievers  
City Attorney

Date of Publication:  
Effective Date:

## EXHIBIT A

Pilot Site Recommended for Immediate Implementation

# Shoreview Park—Concept Design



## EXHIBIT B

Pilot Site Recommended for Immediate Implementation

# Saltwater Park—Concept Design

