

# Seattle's Off-Leash Area Program

## Seattle Parks and Recreation

City Council Public Assets and Homelessness Committee

August 3, 2022

Seattle Parks and Recreation



City of Seattle

# Today's Topics

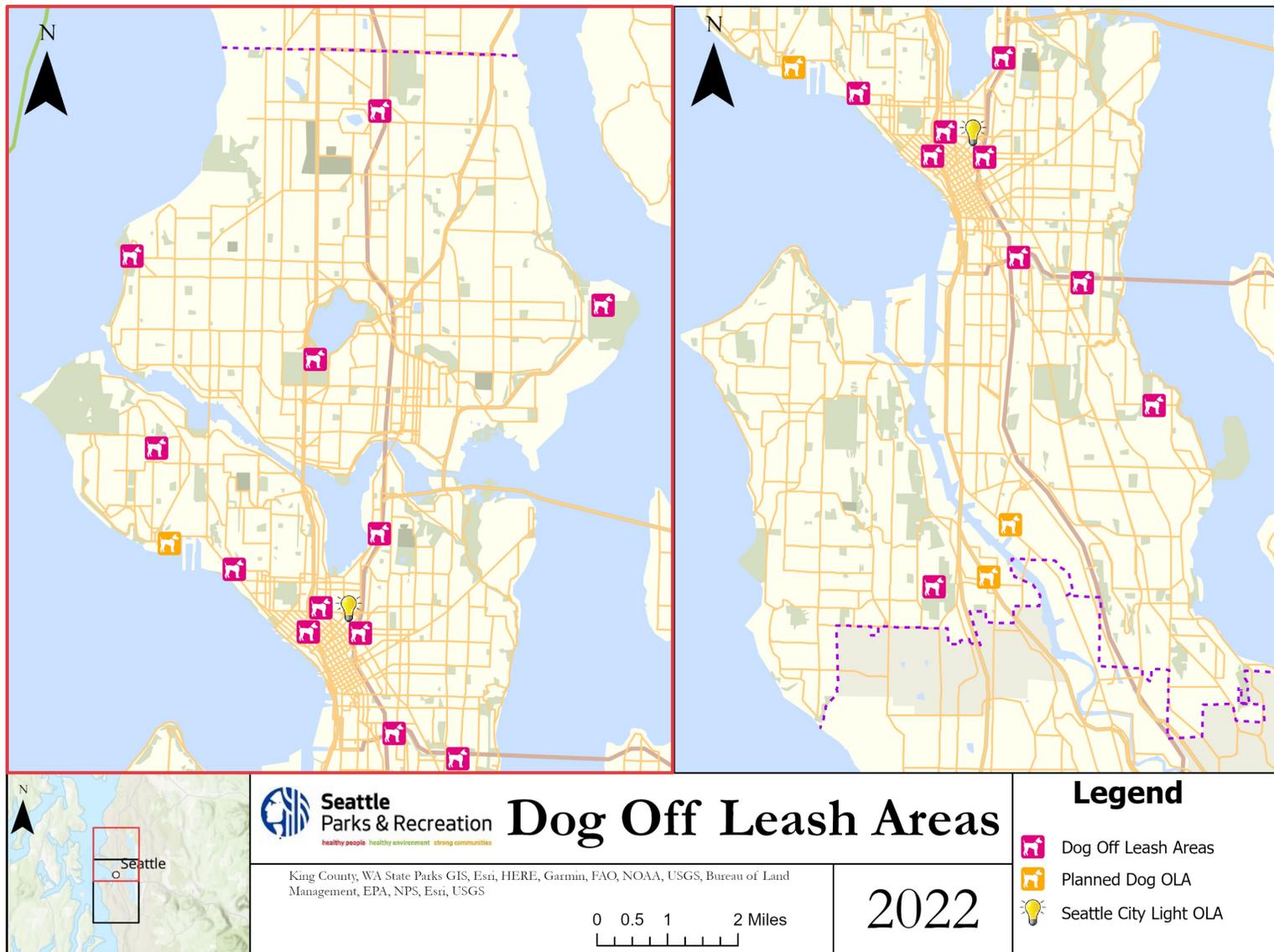
- ▶ **Overview of Seattle's Off-Leash Area (OLA) program**
- ▶ **Maintenance of OLAs**
- ▶ **Expansion of the OLA system**
- ▶ **Educational campaigns**
- ▶ **Enforcement**
- ▶ **What's on the horizon**
- ▶ **Questions?**



# Current Off Leash Area System



- ▶ Seattle's Off-Leash Area (OLA) system dates back to 1997
- ▶ The current 15 fenced OLAs total roughly 28 acres of park land
  - ▶ Ranging in size from 9 acres to 0.1 acres
  - ▶ This, in addition to over 400 parks where leashed dogs are allowed to walk, exercise and have fun
  - ▶ Dogs are not allowed at any time on organized athletic fields, beaches, or children's play areas in Seattle parks, per the Seattle Municipal Code
- ▶ Among the top 12 park systems in the country, TPL ranks Seattle in the top 5 in terms of access to dog parks per capita



# Maintenance of OLAs



- ▶ SPR partners with community organizations maintenance of OLAs
  - ▶ Magnuson Off-Leash Group (MOLG)
  - ▶ Citizens for Off-Leash Areas (COLA)
- ▶ These groups partner with us in...
  - ▶ Day-to-day operations of the OLA
  - ▶ Maintaining a clean and safe environment for OLA visitors
  - ▶ Recruiting volunteer stewards and organizing work parties
  - ▶ Educating OLA visitors about rules and etiquette
  - ▶ Reporting minor and major maintenance needs
  - ▶ Proposing improvements and new amenities
  - ▶ Fundraising and sponsorships

# Maintenance of OLAs



- ▶ SPR staff provide support to OLA volunteer stewards by...
  - ▶ Leading major improvements and installation of new amenities
  - ▶ Providing materials for work parties when requested
  - ▶ Regularly emptying dumpsters and trash cans
  - ▶ Tree assessment and mowing of grass
  - ▶ Responding to and repairing damages from vandalism
  - ▶ Reviewing and approving special maintenance projects at OLAs

# Major Maintenance at OLAs

- ▶ Seattle Park District provides roughly \$100K annually for major maintenance projects at OLAs
- ▶ Between 2017 – 2021 SPR spent \$635,000 on these projects
  - ▶ There is an annual investment that equates to \$120,000 in 2022
- ▶ Examples of projects
  - ▶ Grading improvements at Magnolia Manor
  - ▶ Installing agility equipment at Golden Gardens
  - ▶ ADA and drainage improvements at Westcrest
  - ▶ Small and shy dog area at Genesee
  - ▶ Resurfacing and Fencing
  - ▶ Natural restoration



# Expansion of the OLA system

- ▶ Various strategies for expanding our OLA system:
  - ▶ Adding OLAs through new park/redevelopment projects
  - ▶ Considering land-banked undeveloped sites as OLA opportunities
  - ▶ Proposals by community members
  - ▶ Inter-agency partnerships
  - ▶ Privately owned property



# Standards for New OLAs

## ▶ Threshold Criteria:

- ▶ Not be located in a park that is a designated Seattle landmark, or be listed on the state or federal register of historic places
- ▶ Not be located in natural areas under active restoration, or in an environmentally critical area
- ▶ No conflict with existing park uses in a way that creates safety issues
- ▶ Have preliminary approval from the site owner, if not on SPR land



# Further Considerations



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

# Educational Campaigns

## Pups, Poop & Parks - here's the scoop

We want to keep our furry friends safe along with everyone else. In the video below, meet Buddy the dog and learn where he can roam on and off leash in Seattle, and about the importance of following leash and poop scoop rules to ensure a positive, safe park experience for all, and to support a healthy environment!



In Seattle, pups are welcome in parks as long as they are on a leash; but even better are the 14 exciting exceptions! At these designated off-leash areas, Fido is free to run, roll over, meet new friends, work out, play with his owners and socialize with his canine friends.

[New educational video on best practices for dogs and their owners](#)

An infographic with a light blue background. At the top right is the Seattle Parks & Recreation logo. The main text reads: "— PLEASE BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR — PICK UP AFTER YOUR PET". Below this is an illustration of a woman kneeling to pick up a dog's waste. At the bottom, a green banner says "WE ALL NEED TO DO OUR PART FOR A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT". Below the banner are six teal boxes with icons and text:

- Dog waste is a carrier of the following diseases:** HEARTWORMS, E. COLI, ROUNDWORMS, TAPEWORMS, HOOKWORMS, PARVO, GIARDIASIS, SALMONELLOSIS. (Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- 1 gram** of dog waste contains **23 million** fecal bacteria. (Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- The **EPA** classified pet waste as a dangerous pollutant in the same category as **toxic chemicals**. (Source: Environmental Protection Agency)
- Pet waste can be carried by rainwater to storm drains and into our creeks, lakes, and Puget Sound without treatment. (Source: seattle.gov/311)
- Dog waste can make other dogs and humans sick. (Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Always **BAG IT**, then **TRASH IT** or **TAKE IT HOME!**

New infographic, describing the negative impacts of abandoned dog waste on our environment

# Enforcement



- ▶ Animal Control Officers at the Seattle Animal Shelter are responsible for enforcing the laws and codes involving animals within the city of Seattle
  - ▶ Aggressive behavior by dogs; cruelty; animal abuse; or an animal-related threat to public safety
- ▶ SPR staff and community members regularly share reports of incidents involving dogs with Animal Control
- ▶ ACOs conduct emphasis patrols in OLAs and parks where they are receiving repeated reports

# On the Horizon

- ▶ Some new strategies:
  - ▶ Pursuing smaller, neighborhood OLAs
  - ▶ Increasing focus on geographical equity
  - ▶ Inter-agency partnerships
  - ▶ Adjusting standards where possible, allowing for more OLA opportunities
- ▶ New OLAs in the queue:
  - ▶ Georgetown Flume Property; SPR + SPU + SDOT partnership
  - ▶ South Park Community Center Site Redevelopment
  - ▶ Smith Cove Park Development



# Questions?

