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Responsible Pet Ownership: Dog Parks and Demographic Change in Portland, Oregon.

Matthew Harris
Portland State University

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Responsible Pet Ownership: Dog Parks and Demographic Change in Portland, Oregon

by

Matthew Harris

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Urban Studies
in
Urban Studies

Thesis Committee:
Marisa Zapata, Chair
Lisa Bates
Matthew Gebhardt

Portland State University
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ABSTRACT

Dog parks are the fastest growing type of park in U.S. cities; however, their increasing popularity has been met with increasing criticism of pets in public space. Dogs have shown to be a deep source of neighborhood conflict, and the provision of dog parks, or off-leash areas, is a seemingly intractable controversy for city officials. In 2003, Portland, Oregon established a network of 33 off-leash areas which remains the second largest both in count and per capita in the country. The purpose of my research is to understand the public debate over off leash dogs during the establishment of Portland's off-leash area network, and how dog parks relate to processes of demographic change. The analysis involved two phases. First, I conducted a thematic analysis of editorial perspectives published in the major local newspaper. Second, I conducted an exploratory spatial analysis of the distribution of Portland's off-leash areas and patterns of racial and economic change throughout the city from 2000 to 2015.

Central to the debate are conflicting notions of responsible pet ownership. The notions of responsibility employed in the debate are primarily personal, yet the findings from my exploratory analysis of the relationship between dog parks and demographic change suggest a need to attend to notions of public responsibility. I am not arguing that dog parks explain demographic change; however, I am advocating that future research, discussion, representations, and policy regarding dog parks consider the consequences of off-leash areas as amenities within the changing neighborhoods in which they exist.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Dog parks are the fastest growing type of park in U.S. cities (Trust for Public Land 2015); however, their increasing popularity has been met with increasing criticism of pets in public space. Dogs have shown to be a deep source of neighborhood conflict (Tissot 2011; Drew 2011), and the provision of dog parks, or off-leash areas, is a seemingly intractable controversy for city officials (Thompson 2001). While dog parks are certainly beneficial, the benefits are not experienced universally; they are amenities for some and a disturbance or threat to others (Urbanik and Morgan 2013). Given these contentions, and the close relationship between humans and their companion animals, the literature on dog parks is surprisingly scant.

I identify the majority of literature on dog parks as dog-centric because it privileges dogs, dog owners, and dog parks in the assumptions and framings of the politics and uses of off-leash areas. Research in the disciplines of landscape design, public health, and human-animal studies seeks to improve the user benefits of dog parks (Lee et al. 2009), and tends to conceive of conflicting uses and claims to public space as obstacles to the unquestioned benefit and public good of off-leash areas (Wolch and Rowe 1992; Walsh 2011). Dog-centric literature situates the history of dog parks within an uncomplicated narrative of morally just off-leash activism (Krohe 2005), and investigates a politics of place narrowly focused on whether or not dogs belong in particular public spaces (Instone and Mee 2011).

In contrast to the dog-centric perspective, recent urban studies research explores the relationship between dog parks and broader urban social processes. This perspective

critiques the racial and economic privilege of dog owners and the forms and tactics of off-leash advocacy and activism (Nast 2006a; Holmberg 2013), it examines how racialized urban space informs the location of dog parks (Nast 2006a), and it investigates a politics of place beyond the off-leash area to address demographic change, social exclusion, and political displacement (Tissot 2011; Hyra 2015).

Dog parks are not an inherent feature of the urban landscape; they emerged throughout the 1990s and 2000s as a spatial accommodation to assuage community complaints of off-leash dogs in cities. Dog parks are an urban phenomenon, but the majority of the research and public debate around their production and maintenance focus narrowly on the physical space of the off-leash area at the expense of adequately situating them in the urban histories and changing spaces within which they exist. I am interested in how the social impacts of dog parks extend beyond the boundaries of off-leash areas.

In the summer of 2003, Portland, Oregon established a network of 33 off-leash areas distributed throughout 30 neighborhoods across the city. It remains the second largest off-leash area network both in count and per-capita in the United States (Trust for Public Land 2016). Portland is regarded as one of the dog-friendliest cities in the country, but the history of establishing this paradise for pets reveals a decade of complaints, conflict, and political struggle. The tensions around dogs in Portland's public spaces persist (Drew 2011), and they will likely intensify in the face of continuing population growth and neighborhood change.

The purpose of my research is to understand the public debate over off-leash dogs during the establishment of Portland's off-leash area network, and how dog parks relate

to processes of demographic change. The analysis involved two phases. First, I conducted a thematic analysis of the debate over dogs in public space through editorials published in Portland's major local newspaper, *The Oregonian*, from 2001-2004. I coded the editorials using themes from the literature to compare the debate over Portland's off-leash areas with the broader histories and politics of dog parks. Second, I conducted spatial analyses of the distributions of Portland's off-leash areas and complaints of off-leash dogs in relation to patterns of racial and economic change throughout the city from 2000 to 2015 to see how Portland's demographics have changed since the implementation of the off-leash area network.

Arguments in the editorial debate over Portland's off-leash areas center on conflicting notions of responsibility or responsible pet ownership. The dominant framing of responsibility involves conceptions of appropriate pet owner behavior exemplified through compliance with formal leash and scoop laws as well as informal courtesies of the dog park. Noncompliant dog owners face accusations of irresponsibility. A conflicting notion of responsible pet ownership involves dog owners who feel a sense of responsibility for meeting the perceived exercise needs of their companion animals in urban environments. Off-leash area advocates frame off-leash areas as a moral imperative leading some owners to run their dogs off-leash in unauthorized parks to simultaneously provide exercise and demonstrate a need to expand the off-leash area network.

Given the central role of conflicting notions of responsibility throughout the off-leash area debate, Iris Marion Young's (2011) distinction between personal (individualist) and public (collective) forms of responsibility is useful for interpreting off-leash politics in Portland. The off-leash area debate addresses both the formal policies of

city officials and the informal practices of dog owners and other park users; but ultimately, both sides of the debate employ notions of responsibility which are ‘personal’ or individualist in their narrow focus on their own needs, the perceived needs of their dogs, or the physical space within and around the off-leash area.

Meanwhile, the racial and economic change Portland experienced from 2000 to 2015 suggests an influx of relatively affluent white households to central neighborhoods and the displacement of people of color and low-income residents to further out neighborhoods in East Portland. Amid this racial and economic neighborhood change, 70% of Portland’s off-leash areas are located in block groups that are historically or increasingly advantaged by 2015. These findings lead me to argue for more ‘public’ responsibility in broadening the themes and assumptions within the debate, implementation, and evaluation of dog parks to include issues of classed and racialized urban space, structural inequality, and protections against displacement.

CHAPTER 2: DOG PARKS AND NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE

Dogs in urban public space have been a contentious issue since the 19th century (Walsh 2011, Howell 2012), but the conflict has emerged anew around struggles to establish dog parks in cities across the United States since the mid-1990s. Dog parks are an urban phenomenon, and struggles over the establishment of dog parks exist alongside broader struggles over rapid urban population growth and neighborhood change. Recent research within the urban studies discipline exploring gentrification and displacement situate dog parks within an urban context in order to critique the politics of their establishment. While dogs in parks are controversial, the controversy is not uniform across the city.

In the first section I introduce the spatial category of dog parks and review literature from the dog-centric perspective. This includes research and advocacy around the benefits of dog parks, a representation of morally just activism by dog owners seeking to establish spaces for urban dogs, and a politics of place which focuses on whether or not dogs belong in public space. In the second section, I review the urban studies and gentrification literature on dog parks which critiques the privilege of dog owner activism, and examines how urban patterns of racialized space and neighborhood characteristics inform where dog parks are located. The gentrification literature expands the discussion of politics of place beyond whether or not dogs belong to explore the relationship between dog parks, dog owners, and the exclusion and displacement of long-time residents.

The dog-centric and gentrification perspectives exist within separate disciplines and are not often in conversation. Given the urban nature of dog parks, the literature

inadequately situates them in the urban context within which they exist. The gentrification literature is useful for addressing the blind spots of the dog-centric perspective; however, the gentrification literature fails to engage with the complexity of the debate over dogs in public space. While neither literature offers a complete view of dogs in public space, the tensions between these perspectives are useful for understanding why dog parks are such a contentious issue for cities.

Dog Parks and Off-Leash Areas

Dog parks are parks for dogs, and they are the fastest growing park type in the United States (Trust for Public Land 2015). They are designated spaces, often within city parks, where dogs are permitted to run off leash. Because they primarily exist within larger green spaces, dog parks are often referred to as off-leash areas (OLAs). OLAs are zoned exceptions to city and county leash laws requiring dogs to be leashed in public places. Amenities within OLAs vary across parks within and between cities, but common design and maintenance features include fencing, turf, water, shade, waste bags and bins, benches for owners, and some OLAs include separate areas for small or timid dogs.

Matisoff and Noonan (2012) identify a typology of dog parks as urban environmental amenities. The first type is the open access municipal dog park which is the focus of this study and most dog park research. These are formally established OLAs endorsed by cities with regulations and free access. I use the term “dog park” to refer to the general subject and spatial category of dog parks, and the term “off-leash area” to refer to open access municipal dog parks. Other types of dog parks include fenced in

municipal parks requiring membership and fees, of which there are very few; private residential association parks located in multi-family housing units; and “unofficial” dog parks. Unofficial dog parks are open green spaces not permitted for off-leash use where dog owners gather to allow their dogs to run off leash. Unofficial dog parks are an expression of the sentiment that dog parks are not enacted by city officials as much as they are enacted by humans and dogs co-occupying public space (Instone and Mee 2011). While not the direct subject of this study, unofficial dog parks are key sites because they are spaces where dog owners organize to establish official dog parks.

In this section I review two threads of dog-centric research on dog parks. First, dog parks are the subject of survey-based quantitative analyses of use patterns, user satisfaction, health and social benefits, and design concerns within the landscape design and public health disciplines. Second, dog parks are the sites of qualitative sociology and geography studies of human-animal relationships in urban environments (Wolch and Emel 1998; Philo and Wilbert 2000). The agenda of human-animal studies is to demonstrate the social, political, and economic entanglements between humans and animals and seeks to build a moral argument around the need for cities to provide space for dogs within densely populated and tightly confined urban areas (Wolch 2002). I identify both of the literatures in this section as dog-centric because they privilege the dog and dog owner perspectives by highlighting the benefits of dog parks and the role of dogs in contemporary urban life. This literature situates the history of dog parks within an uncomplicated narrative of morally justified off-leash activism, it perceives conflicts over public space as obstacles to the unquestioned public good of dog parks, and it

investigates a politics of place which focuses primarily on whether or not dogs belong in particular public spaces.

By identifying these literatures as dog-centric I do not suggest that their findings are invalid or that the benefits of dog parks are a fabrication. Rather, I recognize the significance of their findings, but as with all perspectives, the dog-centric perspective is a partial view of the dynamic politics of dogs in urban public spaces.

Benefits of Dog Parks

Proponents and advocates of dog parks refer to the two main benefits of OLAs: exercise and socialization for both dogs and their owners (American Kennel Club 2008; Instone and Mee 2011; Walsh 2011). The benefits of exercise and socialization are central arguments in favor of establishing OLAs and primary areas of dog park research. Research at the intersections of landscape design and public health conduct quantitative survey-based examinations of the factors that hinder or facilitate well-being and user satisfaction in dog parks. Survey findings consistently suggest dog park users perceive the primary benefits of dog parks to be socialization and exercise for themselves and their dogs (Dyke and Phillips 2000; Leet et al., 2009; Gomez 2013). Amenities, location, access, and park design recommendations are suggested to increase the benefits of dog parks and user satisfaction. Findings from these studies inform dog park advocates and parks departments on OLA amenity and allocation decisions. The public health literature examines the physical and psychological well-being benefits of caring for companion animals. A review of empirical findings suggests dog owners are more social and less

isolated, as well as have lower blood pressure, cholesterol, depression, and stress levels than non-dog owners (Cutt et al. 2007). This research examines dog-walking and off-leash areas to improve the benefits of dogs and their owners through a lens that perceives dog parks as an unquestioned public good.

Off-Leash Activism

The first dog park was established in Berkeley, CA in 1979 by local neighbors advocating for a place to run their dogs off leash (Urbanik and Morgan, 2013). Establishing OLAs has continued to be a bottom up process of local dog owners in need of neighborhood parks (Krohe 2005; Tissot 2011). The literature recounts the emergence of dog parks as a response to local leash laws. In *Unleashed Fury: The Political Struggle for Dog-friendly Parks* (2011), Julie Walsh recalls a previous generation when cities were “dog-friendly” before the implementation of leash laws. At the intersection of animal studies and urban studies, Jennifer Wolch (2002) theorizes animals as “the breath, life, soul and spirit of the city (722),” and the treatment of animals as an expression of a city’s moral compass. Leash laws are interpreted as a moral issue because “by restricting canine behavior, [leash laws] also confine human activity and the life of the city itself (Wolch and Rowe 1992: 17).” The provision of OLAs is framed as a moral argument because dog owners perceive the benefits of off-leash exercise as a moral obligation to their pets.

The first leash laws in the United States were enacted in the 1960s, yet most cities enacted them throughout the 1970s and 1980s. However, they were rarely enforced until conflict emerged over off leash dogs in cities throughout the 1990s and 2000s. In Seattle,

citizen complaints over off leash dogs increased. In San Francisco, park naturalists argued that off leash dogs contributed to a noticeable population drop in threatened beach birds such as snowy plovers and bank swallows (Walsh 2011). Both Seattle and San Francisco responded with increased enforcement and leash law citations which mobilized pet owners to organize and advocate for spaces to allow their dogs to run off leash (Harnik and Bridges 2006).

The mobilization of dog owners is central to the creation of officially recognized OLAs. Dog owners organize as either formal or informal citizen groups, local neighborhood associations or nonprofit organizations such as Parkwatch in Laurel Canyon, CA (Wolch and Rowe 1992). Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, dozens of dog park advocacy groups formed in cities across the United States such as SCOOP: Society of Canine Owners for an Off-leash Park in Kansas City, MO; POOP: People Organized for Off-leash dog Parks in Nashville, TN; FIDO: Fellowship in the Interest of Dogs and their Owners in Brooklyn, NY; and ROMP: Responsible Owners of Mannerly Pets in Minneapolis, MN. Dog park advocacy groups do not necessarily dissolve after achieving their goal of establishing a local OLA. They often remain active to advocate for expanded dog park networks, establish group chapters in neighboring cities, and continue to fundraise, maintain, and govern the OLAs they have established.

A culture of self-maintenance and self-governance of dog parks has emerged from the organizing and advocacy efforts of local dog owners. Dog park advocacy groups establish OLAs in city parks and assist in fundraising for amenities. Minimal budgets for animal control agents and park rangers result in scarce official enforcement of OLA regulations; therefore, most accounts of governance refer to the “self-policing” of the

behavior of dog owners and activities of the dog park (Wolch and Rowe 1992; Harnik and Bridges 2006). Wolch and Rowe describe “grassroots efforts” to educate newcomers and the larger community on “park rules and informal behavioral norms (1992: 21),” and “as for enforcement, most park agencies rely substantially on dog lovers themselves, self-policing is the rule, and it usually works (Krohe 2005: 26).” Parks department staff and OLA advocates link the active involvement of committed users to the success of dog parks.

Dog owners have struggled for decades to shift the perception of dog parks from a disturbance and eccentric novelty to a desirable and morally just urban amenity. Advocates can claim significant accomplishments in the visibility of urban dog issues, the large increase of OLAs in cities across the country, and the recognition that OLAs are a legitimate park use and dog owners are a legitimate constituent group. As a result, the language of legitimacy appears increasingly in the literature and planning documents regarding dog parks (Gomez 2013; PP&R 2004: 7). However, the increased popularity of dog parks has been met with increased criticisms of dogs in public space. Next I will review the main conflicts over dogs in public space and dog park politics of place.

Politics of Place: Do Dogs Belong?

Dog parks exist within city parks and the inclusion of space for off-lease use excludes other uses. Urbanik and Morgan (2013) ask how “dog parks fit into resident’s perceptions of their neighborhoods and the city itself (294)” In other words, where do dog parks belong? The process of establishing an OLA enacts a politics of place

consisting of struggles over the meaning and function of a particular place and the identification of who belongs and who does not (Franzen 2002). Proponents of OLAs argue that dogs are a disturbance to public, private, and natural landscapes, as well as the safety and enjoyment of other park users. In addressing the establishment of dog parks, a dog-centric politics of place focuses narrowly on struggles over whether or not dog parks belong in public space.

Urbanik and Morgan's (2013) findings suggest that the controversy over dog parks boils down to disputes between those who envision a dog-friendly city and those who want dogs to be "kept as a controlled, private affair (300)." Instone and Mee (2011) incorporate a boundary lens in their study of perceptions of dog parks in Australia. They label dogs as "boundary-creatures" and dog parks as "boundary-objects" because they both contain a mixture of "admirable" and "despicable" qualities which engender strong human desires to include and exclude them from public space. While dog parks are the spatial category struggled over, the central debate is whether or not dogs belong in a neighborhood.

Conflicts over public space are framed as conflicts between dogs and other social groups. Opponents of dog parks argue that dogs threaten the well-being and safety of neighborhoods and other park users, especially children and the elderly. Primary concerns include dog bites, aggression amongst dogs, and dog poop as a public health concern. Wolch and Rowe's (1992) study of parent groups and homeowners' associations concerned with traffic, private lawns, and property values fought against a dog park proposal in Laurel Canyon, CA by employing polarizing discourse about dog owners and city councilmembers prioritizing the needs of dogs over the needs of community

members and children. These concerns are countered with arguments that unleashed, socialized, and exercised dogs are better behaved and less likely to be aggressive towards humans and other dogs (American Kennel Club 2008; Instone and Mee 2011).

Environmentalists and conservationists argue that dogs disrupt natural habitats and pose a threat to wildlife. Environmental disputes are most documented in coastal areas where dogs have been perceived as a danger to protected shorebirds in California and a dog beach in Chicago on Lake Michigan (Holmberg 2013; Nast 2006a). The charisma and biodiversity of different animal species comes into tension in struggles over urban space.

Conclusion

The dog-centric perspective predominant in examinations of dog parks views off-leash areas as a moral issue and portrays dog owners as just in their struggle to provide spaces where dogs can be dogs in urban environments. However, framing dog parks in terms of conflict between the interests of dogs and the interests of other social groups is a mischaracterization of the conflict. While dogs have agency and express preferences, which further entangles them into the social lives of humans, competing human interests must remain central to examinations of conflict over space for dogs in city parks. If dogs could make political demands, would they limit their conception of freedom to a small patch of grass where they are allowed off leash once per day?

The debates over dog parks are not simply divided between dog owners and those without dogs. Dog owners are not a fixed and unified social group who all bring their

dogs to parks. In focusing on the benefits of dog parks, the dog-centric perspective fails to see beyond the off-leash area. OLAs can be perceived as undesirable and limiting because of issues addressed in the dog-centric research such as inconvenient or inadequate hours, locations, or amenities. But dog parks can also be perceived as undesirable because of their location within a neighborhood or a specific park; they can be perceived to have strict boundaries and ordinances which “position the dog as a problem... in need of control (Instone and Mee 2011: 240);” and the informal governance of activities by other dog owners can be found intimidating or exclusionary. While dog-centric research has produced best practices and improved OLAs, another perspective is needed to situate dog parks within broader urban processes. In the next section, I venture beyond the OLA fence to review the gentrification literature which explores the relationship between dog parks and neighborhood change.

Neighborhood Change

Characteristics of neighborhood change include increases and decreases in housing markets, business districts, and the demographics of local residents. Deindustrialization and racial segregation in the United States are structural conditions central to processes of neighborhood change. Processes of economic development influence population distribution throughout cities and metropolitan regions, and they determine which areas thrive and which decline. Urban space is produced in ways which encourage economic growth and urban politics tend to privilege already advantaged

residents. Increases in affluent residents within urban areas are accompanied by increases in structurally disadvantaged residents.

Urban deindustrialization, the displacement of central city manufacturing jobs facilitated through first suburbanization, polarized the class structure of large cities. An elite service economy emerged to employ educated and highly paid workers in the management, finance, and technology sectors. At the same time, lower-skilled workers suffer from long term unemployment or contingent and low wage service jobs. Rather than implementing strategies to improve the social and economic conditions of residents, urban political strategies focus on the “speculative construction of place (Harvey 1989: 08)” in attempts to attract high-income professional residents and industries. Cultural activities and quality of life are viewed as central drivers of urban economic vitality (Clark et al 2002). The economic function of cities shifted from production to consumption, therefore, cities increasingly focus on providing amenities and consumption spaces that reflect the cultural preferences and values of affluent populations.

Massey and Denton (1993) argue that in addition to economic restructuring, structural racism subsidized white suburbanization and Black segregation through federal mortgage programs, real estate practices and uneven patterns of racialized investment and disinvestment. American metropolitan regions are divided into two-tiered racialized housing and labor markets which disadvantage Black households and workers who suffer from structural conditions of social and geographic isolation, concentrated poverty, and a lack of access to employment and political power. These structural conditions of racial and economic inequality spatialized throughout central city neighborhoods and

metropolitan regions produce concentrations of affluence and poverty, and the precarious employment and housing conditions of long-time residents in devalued and disinvested neighborhoods make them susceptible to displacement from increasingly affluent newcomers.

Changing neighborhood demographics produce tension between newcomers and long-time residents. While newcomers make claims to spaces and attempt to redefine the appropriate use of those spaces, long-term residents push back against the shifting identity and character of the neighborhood (Frazer 2004). However, the combination of public and private reinvestment, a rapid influx of new residents, and increased community participation in governance - all in the name of revitalization and urban competitiveness - make it difficult for long-time residents to abate neighborhood transformation.

Middle-class newcomers can bolster the infrastructure and political capacity of lower-income, disinvested, or minority neighborhoods, however, newcomers often have different priorities and advocate for amenities at odds with the interests of long-time residents. Derek Hyra refers to this process as political displacement: when long-time racial groups “become outvoted or outnumbered by new residents’ leading to the loss of decision-making power by the former group (Hyra 2014; Martin 2007).” Hyra studies newcomer-dominated neighborhood committees in Washington DC whose political actions “push out Black institutions symbolizing the old neighborhood.” Newcomers advocate for bike lanes, cafes, dog parks, and other amenities perceived against the interests of long-time residents because they are seen as signs of neighborhood change and gentrification which increase their vulnerability to housing displacement.

Dog Parks and Neighborhood Change

Dog parks are not an inherent feature of urban space. They are the product of shifting cultural values and political struggle within the context of social and economic neighborhood transformation. Neighborhood change is commonly associated with housing markets and commercial corridors, but the character of public spaces such as parks begin to transform as increasingly affluent populations move to a neighborhood. Dog parks are amenities for residents who benefit from them, they are perceived as a disturbance by other residents, and they are increasingly seen as a symbol of neighborhood change. If parks and other public spaces reveal race, class and gender relations within urban landscapes, then it is important to acknowledge that dog owners have become a powerful identity group (Urbanik and Morgan 2013).

Research at the intersection of dog parks and neighborhood change critique dog parks within larger processes of urban development. This perspective focuses on racial, political, and economic inequality in its examinations of privileged off leash activists, the racialized space of urban dog parks, and the relationship between dog parks, neighborhood change, and displacement. This perspective is useful for addressing a number of the blind spots of the dog-centric perspective with regards to situating dog parks within urban social and political structures.

Privileged Off-Leash Activism

The dog-centric perspective celebrates pet owners as off-leash activists. Krohe recounts a history of leash laws turning dog owners into “law breakers,” and that

“running dogs unleashed is a justifiable act of civil disobedience (Krohe 2005: 24).” Counter to this portrayal of the off-leash activist, urban studies scholarship questions the motives of pet owners, and the racial and economic privilege of dog park associations. In her examination of a dog beach in Santa Cruz, California, Tara Holmberg notices members of the dog park interest organization are well equipped with economic and cultural capital (Holmberg 2013), and dog park associations in Boston as comprised of white affluent newcomer residents with the political identity and know-how to enact local change (Tissot 2011). Derek Hyra (2015) explores how the Shaw / U Street dog park in Washington DC is the result of advocacy by mainly white middle- and upper-income residents. Findings from a study of the relationship between race, space, and dog parks in Chicago suggest how dog owners with “political cachet and disposable income and time create and control these landscapes (Nast, 2006a: 240).”

Surveys of dog park users across North America reveal that dog parks are a disproportionately white and affluent urban phenomenon. A survey conducted across three dog parks in Calgary found 80% of respondents identified as white (Rock et al. 2016a). A survey on user perceptions of dog parks in Texas and Florida revealed that 79% of respondents identified as white; 81% reported annual incomes above \$60k and 39% with incomes above \$100k (Lee et al. 2009). Matisoff and Noonan’s dog park user survey in Atlanta, GA found a \$76,180 median income (2012). While these racial and income disparities are documented in the dog-centric literature, they are rarely acknowledged in accounts of the history and politics of establishing OLAs.

The privileged position of dog park advocates is highlighted in critiques of their ability to informally appropriate space for their animals. In a description of the struggle to

claim an under-utilized park as a dog park in Laurel Canyon, CA, Wolch and Rowe argue that “the park was rarely used by neighborhood residents except for one group: people who took their dogs to run in the park -illegally- off-leash (1992: 17).” Heidi Nast (2006a) studies Doggie Beach, which is not an official Chicago Park District dog park, yet “it is Chicago’s most well-known and popularly frequented beach for dogs (240).” Nast’s interviews with lifeguards on Doggie Beach reveal the entitlement of “combative” and verbally abusive dog owners when told they cannot run their dogs off leash along the beach (246). Idealized and de-politicized portrayals of off leash activism leave questions of racial and economic privilege unasked.

Dog Parks in Racialized Space

Although dog parks are public spaces available to anyone, failing to account for the spatial distribution and privilege of users is to disregard key dynamics that must be addressed in order for dog parks to become a feature of equitable urban development. The City of Calgary’s impressive 148 dog parks occupy 17% of the city’s green space. An equity assessment of access to Calgary’s dog park network found that most of the city’s dog owners lived within 800 meters of a dog park, however, many low-income neighborhoods were underserved (Rock et al. 2016b). Dog parks are a recent example of the historic pattern of discrepancies in urban services and resources produced by racialized space.

Pincetl and Gearin (2005) recount a 20th century history of city park allocation determined by neighborhood characteristics. Siting decisions and amenities were

differentially allocated across cities and explicitly informed by conceptions of neighborhood needs and worth based on ideas of race and class. Interview participants from low-income neighborhoods express feeling “acutely conscious of their marginal status,” and acknowledge that their neighborhoods lack civic capacity and political clout with city hall. They believe it is unlikely that they will find success in developing parks and other green spaces without professional assistance from organizers, city planners and politicians. Moreover, even if they receive assistance, their “fundamental structural problem of powerlessness” will remain unchanged (378).

Heidi Nast’s study of the racialized space of dog parks in Chicago found that all but one of the city’s 12 dog parks were located in the primarily white North Side of Chicago. The predominantly Black South Side of Chicago has one dog park in the privileged Hyde Park neighborhood. Nast draws parallels between dog parks and waterfront redevelopment in Chicago to situate dog parks within broader processes of uneven post-industrial urban development. She argues that while the North Side harbor has enjoyed waves of reinvestment, Black residents have historically lacked the political identity and economic resources to establish a harbor facility on the South Side. While Doggie Beach in the white North Side is an unsanctioned hot spot for dog runners, Black pet owners in Chicago lack the “cultural and political cachet required to otherwise illegally appropriate a piece of city turf for their dogs (Nast, 2006a: 240).” Therefore, Nast would take aim at Krohe’s privileged telling of the history of the first dog park as “a response to the appropriation of a city-owned vacant lot by off-leash activists (Krohe 24)” because it is their privileged status and white political identity that allows these dog owners to appropriate space both formally and informally for their animals.

Dog Parks and Displacement

Cities increasingly recognize that enhancing parks and public spaces improves the perception of a neighborhood's livability. Interviews with Kansas City residents express that dog parks "improve city living," contribute to their quality of life, and potentially attract new residents which increase their tax base (Urbanik and Morgan 2013). A primary lens through which the gentrification literature views dog parks is the struggle between newcomers and long-time residents. The dog park user is viewed as a newcomer who threatens the culture, politics, and affordability of a neighborhood.

Whereas Nast's study of Chicago provides an example of racialized space and disparities in political power, Derek Hyra (2015) examines shifts in political power from long-time Black residents to incoming white residents as a function of neighborhood change in Washington DC. The relationship between neighborhood change, racial politics, and dog parks is explored through what Hyra refers to as political displacement. Neighborhood and civic associations in Washington DC are historical strongholds of local Black political power. Hyra documents the process of affluent whites moving to historically Black neighborhoods, becoming active in local associations, and shifting association priorities in directions often unaligned with the interests of long-time Black residents. Extensive advocacy efforts from increasingly white neighborhood associations pressured the city to build a dog park despite resistance from Black residents concerned that dog parks are an amenity associated with the "changing landscape in gentrifying areas (Hyra 2015: 1766)." Long-time Black residents express simultaneously feeling alienated in their own neighborhoods and fearing their impending displacement.

Involuntary displacement is an outcome of both structural conditions and newcomer-driven neighborhood change. Displacing long-time residents is not the malicious intent of affluent newcomers, in fact, many newcomers cite diversity as a key reason for moving to a neighborhood (Brown-Saracino 2004). Sylvie Tissot's research explores the tensions between the ways in which newcomers celebrate and control diversity (2011). Tissot's examination of neighborhood change in the South End of Boston suggests that dog parks serve as a way for newcomers to symbolically sing the praises of community and diversity while simultaneously functioning as exclusionary spaces for white affluent newcomers to meet in public spaces of gentrifying neighborhoods.

The dog-centric perspective justifies displacement through the representation of dog owners as a positive force reclaiming parks from less desirable users in the name of safety. Similar to how nature conservationists and parents of children frame dogs as a disruption, dog owners present themselves as upgraded park users in relation to "deviant" central city park users. Sylvie Tissot's (2011) research shows how dog parks in gentrifying neighborhoods serve as sites of contestation between middle-class newcomer dog owners and "deviant" populations such as "prostitutes, homeless people, drug addicts, elderly... clients of social agencies... [and behaviors such as] smoking, drinking, and loud incoherent speech (272)." In interviews with dog park users in Boston, they underscore their positive impact on the park by displacing these deviant populations. Jennifer Wolch describes her prior research (re: Wolch and Rowe 1992) as documentation of "how a degraded public park was 'taken back' from drug-users and prostitutes by an informal group of dog-owners who invested in improvements and

security, and used the presence of large off-leash dogs - illegally - to discourage less desirable uses (Wolch 2002).”

Regarding the establishment of a dog park, a Seattle parks department spokesperson recommends trying to “find property with no history” to avoid persuading the public of changing a park’s use (Harnik and Bridges 2006). However, here “history” is interpreted as history of privileged use in light of the Seattle Parks department’s 1995 conversion of three parks with high complaints of alcohol, drug use, and sexual activity into pilot dog parks. Stated simply, “dog parks have the ability to convert unsafe parks to safe parks (Gomez 2013: 83).” The dog-centric perspective celebrates dogs for helping to get rid of criminal activity and “reclaim parks from illegal users (Harnik and Bridges 2006).”

Establishing areas for dogs to run while making parks safer appears to be a win-win arrangement on the surface, but crime is not all that is subject to displacement. The persistence of residential displacement has led environmental justice (EJ) advocates to re-evaluate the role of parks in cities. EJ research and advocacy began by documenting the “unequal exposure, risk, and burden” to pollution and negative health outcomes. Isabelle Anguelovski (2016) tracks the shift in EJ research from a focus on negative environmental risks towards a focus on equitable access to positive environmental services and goods in cities and neighborhoods. Through this lens, a concern emerges regarding processes of “green gentrification.” In addition to traditional environmental injustice indicators such as concentrations of industrial pollution and air toxins, EJ researchers examine fresh food stores and neighborhood parks because these sites create the conditions for reinvestment and displacement of vulnerable populations.

Conclusion

Literature and empirical research at the intersection of dog parks and neighborhood change is limited. Urban studies researchers have recently begun to consider the urban phenomenon of dog parks and address their relationship with issues of privilege, racialized space, and displacement. However, it has yet to regard the dog park as a primary research subject on its own; it remains a symptom or subtopic within broader analyses of displacement. Therefore, while insightful, these analyses tend to lead to a one dimensional representation of dog park conflict as simply between gentrifier dog owners and long-time low-income residents. As I explore in the next chapter, Portland has experienced these forms of conflict over dogs in public space and neighborhood change reviewed in the literature.

CHAPTER 3: DOG PARKS IN PORTLAND

Portland is home to the second largest network of off-leash areas (OLAs) both in count and per capita in the United States (Trust for Public Land 2016). The route towards this impressive OLA network has been a contentious struggle over sharing public space with dogs. A central impetus behind the creation of the OLAs was to assuage the conflict around unleashed dogs throughout Portland's park system. Although 33 Portland parks across 30 neighborhoods have officially designated off-leash areas, dogs in public space remain a major controversy in Portland.

I begin with a history of Portland's Off-Leash Area program through the lens of parks department planning documents and *The Oregonian*, Portland's major local newspaper. Due to limited source material, this is not a complete history of Portland's OLA program, however, it is a brief view into the politics of dog parks in Portland spanning from 1995 to 2004. 1995 marks the emergence of enough citizen complaints of off-leash dogs to warrant media coverage and the designation of three trial off-leash areas in 1996. From 1996 to 2004 citizens argued either for the expansion or removal of the trial off-leash areas. As a result of the source material, this history emphasizes local parks department policies and politics as well as actions taken within city parks by both proponents and opponents of dogs in city parks. Portland city council approved a policy to establish a permanent and expanded off-leash area network in 2003. The final period addresses the citizen response and parks department evaluation of the off-leash area program.

Following a history of the OLA program, I situate the parks within the city through a brief description of Portland's neighborhood geography. I consider the

disparities between neighborhoods East and West of 82nd Avenue as well as OLAs in parks within areas that have experienced significant neighborhood demographic change either historically, such as neighborhoods in the Albina District, or more recently, such as the waterfront revitalization of the dog-friendly Pearl District.

Portland's Off-Leash Area Program

For park and political leaders, the issue of off-leash dogs is one of the most intractable, enduring and downright nasty policy problems around. "This is the No. 1 challenge in my entire career that I tell my boss I don't know how to solve," says Charles Jordan, [then] director of Portland Parks and Recreation.

(Thompson, 2001)

Commonly referred to as leash laws, the Multnomah County Code (2016) states that it is unlawful to permit an "animal at large" in public space:

any animal, excluding domestic cats, that is not physically restrained on owner's or keeper's premises... or, is not physically restrained when on public property, or any public area, by a leash, tether or other physical control device not to exceed eight feet in length and under the physical control of a capable person.

Multnomah County's animal at large policy was passed in 1977, yet sparsely enforced, without noticeable complaint until the 1990s. By 1995, concern emerged over a perceived increase in unleashed dogs and complaints that leash laws were inadequately enforced. Articles appeared in local newspaper with complaints that "more and more citizens are running their dogs unleashed in Portland's parks (Kiyomura 1995)," then Commissioner Charlie Hales told *The Oregonian* that "the city's leash law is widely ignored and unenforced (Mayer 1995)" and then Mayor Vera Katz admitted that "she would take [her dog] to her neighborhood park early and late in the day and drop its leash to let it run free

(Christ 1997).” An increase in citizen complaints of dogs off leash in parks led to the creation of a Portland Parks department citizen task force to look into the issue. The task force produced a report titled “Dogs in Parks” which “strongly recommended that the City of Portland develop a long-term comprehensive policy to address the issue, including designated off-leash areas throughout the city (Gimour et al 2003).”

Portland Parks and Recreation established three trial off-leash areas at Chimney Park, Gabriel Park, and Mt. Tabor in 1996. Parks officials were criticized for lack of public participation in the siting decisions. Chimney and Gabriel are difficult to access at far ends of the city, but the OLAs were well used because they were the only official options for off-leash use. Mt. Tabor is the most centrally located of the three trial parks, and it served as a proxy in the media for the entire off-leash conflict. The *Oregonian* printed heated editorials from dog owners and opponents in the debate over whether or not to establish a full system of off-leash areas. Two separate short lived off-leash areas in Mt. Tabor were closed by 1999. The first area was sited adjacent to a city water reservoir and moved after city employees found dog waste and toys in the reservoir. The second area was closed by a citizen committee park plan recommendation citing that the off-leash area did not belong in the park (Hortsch 1999).

The Citywide Off-Leash Task Force was a second advisory group created in 1999 to evaluate the trial off-leash areas and recommend next steps for dogs in city parks. In February 2000, the task force unanimously recommended for an expansion of off-leash areas with a five dollar increase in pet licensing fees to offset funding (Leeson 2000). In addition, the task force emphasized the need for education and enforcement of leash and scoop laws (PP&R 2004).

To address citizen criticisms of the previous lack of public process, the city requested neighborhood associations to offer recommendations for new off-leash areas (Briggs 2002). However, after over five years of tension and conflict, the decision to site dog parks proved much more politically demanding than expected. Four of the seven neighborhood coalitions participated: Southwest Neighbors Inc., Central Northeast Neighbors, East Portland Neighborhood Office and Southeast Uplift; they sought to identify parks that most neighbors found acceptable for off-leash areas. Three coalitions found siting off-leash areas too controversial and opted out because they were concerned that such a complex and emotional issue required more individual neighborhood outreach (Thompson 2002).

Another year passed with limited access to dog parks and opponent perceptions that dog owners continue to disregard leash and scoop laws. As tensions and complaints increased, and media coverage of OLAs focused on the inaction of the city and parks department with editorial accusations that they have “inexcusably dithered for years (Gundle 2003).” The tone is frustrated and direct: “the rest of us, meanwhile, are waiting for the city to stop having committee meetings, already, and come up with effective enforcement strategies and more off-leash parks and hours (Mitchell 2003).”

In the summer of 2003, 15 dogs were poisoned in Laurelhurst Park with sausages tainted with an industrial herbicide (Austin and Nkrumah 2003b). The poisoning hit a nerve in Portland. The person who planted the poisoned sausages around Laurelhurst Park was never found, but the media coverage of the dead dogs was politicized with the contours of the off-leash area debates. In an interview with a family who lost their dog in the incident, one family member “acknowledges that she had the dog off leash, and she

knows some people will criticize her for it. But she said it's not worth taking the life of someone's companion (Nkrumah and Austin 2003a)." An editorial perspective blamed the inaction of the city for the deadly vigilante enforcement of leash laws:

Portland Parks and Recreation is to blame for the spate of dog poisonings at Laurelhurst Park, either because a dog-leash zealot has grown tired of its inaction and taken matters into his own hands or because some dogs were off leash and vulnerable because they were not provided designated park space in which to run (Barrington 2003).

Parks department officials claim they were on course to expand the off-leash area network, but the poisonings in Laurelhurst Park pressured the implementation of the off-leash area program.

One month following the poisonings in Laurelhurst Park, the Parks department proposed a one year trial of a greatly expanded off-leash area network. In August 2003, the Portland City Council unanimously approved and allocated funds for a large and comprehensive citywide network of off-leash areas as well as an ordinance for stricter enforcement of off-leash and scoop laws (Nkrumah 2003b; PP&R 2004). There have been multiple site adjustments over the years, but this is essentially the off-leash area network currently in place in Portland's park system.

The media coverage of the off-leash area network expansion was not celebratory in tone, rather it tended to highlight perspectives that the city and park department provided too little, too late. An interview with a co-chair of the off-leash work group for the Southeast Uplift neighborhood coalition expressed dismay over a hasty dog park plan:

I know they were under a lot of pressure to move quickly, so after five years of no activity or very little activity on the off leash issue, suddenly they threw together this whole big plan in about two months, and they didn't work with the community at all.' ... seemed like yet another lost opportunity to work with the public (Nkrumah 2003b).

Off-leash area users were not presented as celebrating a victory for themselves and their dogs, rather they were also dissatisfied with the city's plan. Many of the off-leash areas were proposed with limited morning and evening hours which were viewed as too inflexible and left dog owners "little choice but to violate the leash law." A Northeast Portland resident said "the hours and the areas are not doable, they're just not. You might as well start giving me tickets now because I'm not going to be able to follow the rules (Nkrumah 2004c)."

In November of 2003, the Off-Leash Advisory Committee (OLAC), a citizen advisory group, was established to evaluate the off-leash area program and offer recommendations for siting and policy adjustments (PP&R 2004). The committee included "representatives from each of the seven neighborhood coalitions, a dog trainer, veterinarian, natural resources advocate, and a member of the sports field working group, as well as off-leash advocates and people who do not own dogs (PP&R 2004: 6)." During the 13 month evaluation, the committee conducted 15 meetings, three public meetings, off-leash site tours and "heard extensive public comment" before issuing the Off-Leash Program Evaluation and Recommendations Report to Council in December 2004 (PP&R 2004).

The OLAC's fundamental assumptions in their evaluation of the off-leash area network are that a) "recreating with a dog is a legitimate park use" and b) "conflict is inevitable (PP&R 2004: 7)." These assumptions are in line with a thread throughout the history of dog parks, with proponents struggling to shift community perceptions of dog parks from a disturbance to a legitimate park use and municipal conceptions of dog owners as a legitimate political constituency.

Portland's Neighborhoods and Off-Leash Areas

Portland's off-leash area network is well distributed throughout the city. OLAs are found in parks across 30 Portland neighborhoods experiencing various degrees of demographic change, development, redevelopment, and decline. First, I explore a major division through the geography of Portland, the 82nd Avenue corridor. Significant disparities between neighborhood characteristics, the provision of urban services, and capital investment persist on either side of 82nd Avenue. Popular imaginations of Portland are of neighborhoods west of 82nd Avenue, while neighborhoods east of 82nd Avenue more likely to have higher proportions of people of color and people living in poverty. Five (~15%) of Portland's OLAs are located in neighborhoods east of 82nd Avenue. Next, I consider three OLAs located throughout the Albina district which has experienced a history of long-term racial segregation, structural disinvestment, displacement and significant racial transition. Lastly, I discuss The Fields OLA located in the Pearl District which is a revitalized industrial waterfront now boasting a wide array of luxury dog retail and services.

82nd Avenue

In their study of the uneven development of sustainability in Portland, Goodling et al (2015) examine the relationship between increases in whiteness, affluence, and sustainability in Portland's central neighborhoods and increases in people of color, poverty or low-income residents, and an overall devaluation of neighborhoods in East Portland. Using 2000 and 2010 US Census data, they examine the differences in change

between East Portland and the rest of Portland (519). The city overall experienced 10% population increase and 32% increase of residents living in poverty from 2000 to 2010, however, most of the increases occurred in East Portland. The population growth in East Portland was nearly double the growth in the rest of the city (15% to 8% respectively), yet more significantly, the 56% increase in residents experiencing poverty in East Portland far exceeds the 21% increase in residents living in poverty throughout the rest of Portland.

The disparity between either side of 82nd Avenue in terms of affluence indicated by whiteness and income is visualized in Figure 1. Block groups identified as *increase* experienced increases in both proportions of white population and median household income from 2000 to 2015 at rates greater than the city overall. Block groups labelled *decrease* experienced decreases in these indicators during the same time period, and block groups labelled *constant* experienced insignificant changes or an opposite increase and decrease in the indicators. Block groups east of 82nd are more likely to experience decreases of white population and median household incomes. Among the 89 block groups in East Portland, 65% experienced decreases in whites and incomes. Only 4 block groups in East Portland experienced increases in both indicators! In contrast, 171 (50%) of the 339 remaining block groups in Portland west of 82nd Avenue experienced increases in whites and income, and 10% of block groups experienced decreases. The disparities between each side of 82nd Avenue suggest patterns of residential movement within the city. While households certainly move from other cities to neighborhoods on either side of 82nd Avenue, the pattern of increasing whites and income in central

Portland suggests displacement of lower-income people of color from those central neighborhoods to neighborhoods in East Portland.

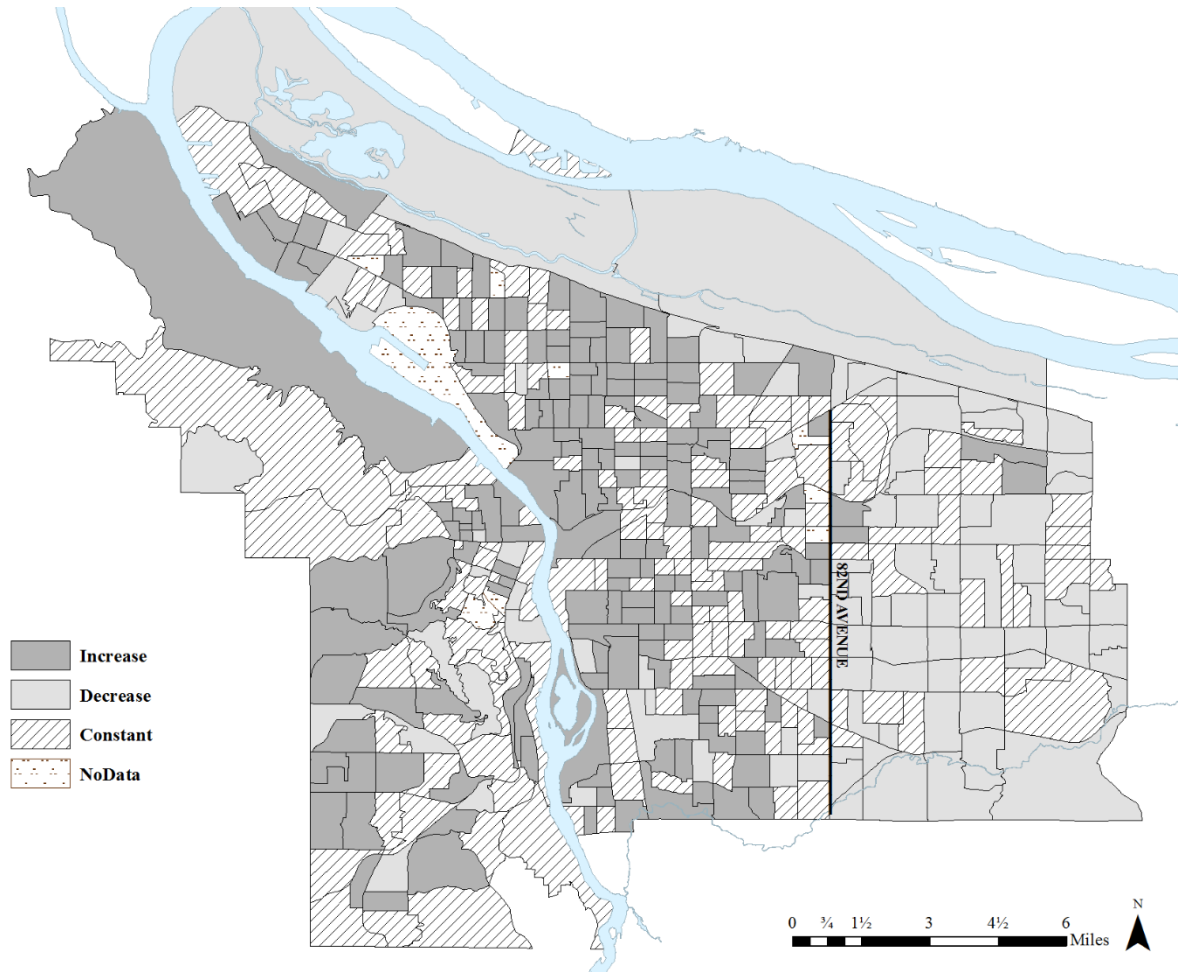


Figure 1: Block Group Demographic Change in Portland, Oregon (2000-2015). Proportions of non-Hispanic white population and median household income. Data source: 2000 decennial U.S. Census data and 2015 ACS 5-year estimates.

Racial and economic disparities between neighborhoods must be acknowledged because concentrations of social advantage and disadvantage produce and compound racialized and class-based structural and institutional outcomes such as housing stability, access to health care, political representation, educational attainment, and employment

opportunities (Lipsitz 2006; powell 2007). These concentrations reveal processes of uneven development, and a relational interdependency between the development of some areas at the expense of others (Smith 1982; Young 2002). I will now briefly describe two neighborhoods west of 82nd Avenue with parks containing OLAs: Irving Park in the Irvington neighborhood and The Fields in the Pearl District.

Irving Park and the Irvington Neighborhood

Portland's Black community has historically been racially segregated in the North Portland neighborhoods of the Albina District. Decades of public and private discrimination, neglect, and disinvestment throughout the 20th century destabilized the value and opportunities of the community. By the 1990s, property abandonment rates were high enough and property values were low enough to make the Albina District "ripe for gentrification (Gibson 2007: 6)." Public reinvestment and private speculation and revalorization set the conditions for an influx of white residents leading to further displacement of the Black population and significant racial transition.

Irving Park is located in the Irvington neighborhood within the Albina District. The Black population in the Irvington neighborhood peaked in 1970 at 43%, but decreased every year to 23% by 2000 (Gibson 2007: 8). The 2015 (ACS 5-year estimate) Black population of the block group containing Irving Park is 8.8% while the white population climbed to 86%. The median household income of the Irving Park block group (\$137,679) is 2.5 times greater than the city median income of \$55,003. Persistent racial and economic transition is not limited to the Irving Park block group; rather, from

2000 to 2015, 38 of the 45 block groups constituting the Albina District experienced increases in both white population and median household incomes at rates greater than the city of Portland overall.

The history of devaluation and racial transition in Portland is apparent in how residents experience and characterize these changing neighborhoods. Shaw and Sullivan (2011) interview residents of the gentrifying Alberta Arts District on the eastern edge of the Albina District to explore race and class tensions between newcomers and long-time residents. They find that Black and white residents both participate in what they refer to as the insider-outsider “boundary work” of demonstrating that they are authentic insiders and belong in the neighborhood. However, Black and white residents do not characterize outsiders in the same way. For white respondents, outsiders were higher income gentrifiers from other Portland neighborhoods or California. For Black respondents, outsiders were typically white people, about whom they “expressed feelings of discomfort and exclusion (255).”

The Restorative Listening Project is a monthly cross-racial anti-racist dialogue to discuss the impacts of gentrification in Northeast Portland neighborhoods between long-time Black residents and white middle-class newcomers. Interviews with participants (Drew 2012) found that new white residents were unable to see how their behaviors in the neighborhood could be experienced as oppressive by long-time Black residents. Dogs were such a frequent and contentious topic that three weekly listening sessions were dedicated to discussing “race and dogs.” Black concerns raised include claims that whites treated their dogs better than they treated their Black neighbors in using their dogs as intimidation and security against them. Whites were also accused of allowing their dogs

off leash and not scooping after them as well as being defensive and combative when confronted. One woman expressed feeling like an outsider in her community and that “apparently the rules... don’t apply to white people (Drew 2012: 108).”

The Fields and the Pearl District

The waterfront North of Downtown Portland developed in the late 19th century as a manufacturing and warehousing district well connected to the rail transport network. The waterfront was central to the city’s economy until the industrial decline and economic restructuring of the mid-20th century. By the 1960s, many of the waterfront businesses had closed or moved to suburban locations leaving the area in disuse, devalued, and prime for redevelopment (Jones 1999). Reclaiming the industrial buildings as ahistorical “aesthetic touchstones (Hagerman 2007)” became key to the expectations and imaginations of waterfront redevelopment in the late 20th century. Previously known as the “Warehouse District” or the “Brewery District,” the area was renamed the Pearl District in 1986 to promote an arts festival where one could find gems inside the crusty warehouses (Gragg 1997).” The Fields OLA in the Pearl District opened 10 years after the OLA program was established. The Fields opened in May 2013 as part of a series of parks budgeted at four million dollars along the waterfront urban renewal area (Hottman 2013).

The Pearl District primarily consists of the single affluent block group containing the Fields OLA and portions of two other block groups. From 2000 to 2015, The Fields block group experienced a 57% increase from \$49k to \$77k (2015 adjusted dollars).

While the 2015 proportion of white population in The Fields block group is 86%, the proportions of Black (3%) and Latino (3.7%) residents are fractions of the disproportionately low citywide averages of 5.7% and 9.8% respectively. The Fields contains substantially less households with children than the city overall. While 18.6% of Portland's 2015 population is under the age of 18, only 5.5% of the Fields block group is under the age of 18. These indicators of affluence and low proportion of youth in the area are reflected in the lack of childcare services and a notable concentration of specialty services and luxury consumption spaces catering to dog owners.

Dog spaces and human spaces overlap and the language of human services is employed in descriptions of the pet economy in the Pearl District. The Fields OLA is featured as an amenity in nearby condominium advertisements with an animal hospital directly across the street. The neighborhood groomer is called a dog salon and the boarding facility is a social club. Pet owners can purchase fresh dog biscuits at bakeries. A dog-themed brewery housed in an old freightliner warehouse welcomes dogs, and a grooming and boarding facility marketed as a dog hotel serves local coffee, beer, and wine. Portland ranks well in dog-friendly city listings in media oriented to pet-owners because of its OLA network at the density of the dog related consumption and services in the Pearl.

Conclusion

The history of dog parks in Portland positions them as a response to complaints of off leash dogs in city parks. Therefore, dog parks are an inherently urban phenomenon,

and the local politics of establishing and maintaining off-leash areas are informed by the characteristics of the neighborhoods within which they are located. Neighborhood politics are informed by alliances and division, histories of transition, and how amenity spaces represent a city or neighborhood beyond their own boundaries. I include these brief neighborhood profiles to highlight the existing histories and tensions within the neighborhood and how situating dog parks within an urban context illuminates how tensions between newcomers and long-time residents can heighten or center on changing uses of neighborhood public space. In the next chapter I will describe my methodology for analyzing the public debate over the establishment of Portland's Off-Leash Area program and how I situate it within the urban context of Portland's changing neighborhoods.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of my research is to understand the public debate over off-leash dogs during the establishment of Portland's off-leash area (OLA) network, and how the debate over OLAs relates to processes of neighborhood change in Portland. I conducted two analyses to address these questions. First, I conducted a thematic analysis of the public debate over Portland's off-leash areas through coding editorials published in the major local newspaper. I used codes derived from previous research in order to compare the debate in Portland with the analysis of off-leash politics in the literature. Next, I conducted exploratory spatial analyses of the distribution of OLAs and complaints of off-leash dogs in relation to patterns of racial and economic change in order to situate Portland's off-leash areas in the demographically changing neighborhoods within which they exist.

Portland is a useful case for examining the relationship between dog parks and neighborhood change because it is home to the second largest system of dog parks both in count and per capita in the United States (Trust for Public Land 2015). The impressive OLA network is well distributed throughout 30 neighborhoods across the city making possible a comparison of dog parks in relation to broader patterns of demographic movement in the city. The rich dataset of published editorials concerning Portland's off-leash area debate offer many perspectives on both the formal policies of city officials and the informal practices of dog owners and other park users.

Editorial and Complaint Analysis Media Search

I conducted a search of articles related to off leash dogs in Portland's major local newspaper, *The Oregonian*, from 1995 to 2016. I searched the NewsBank article database for "DOG" AND "PORTLAND" in the LEAD PARAGRAPH and "OFF LEASH" OR "OFF-LEASH" in ALL TEXT from DATE(S): 1995-2016. The time boundary of the analysis begins with 1995 to capture complaints and conflict leading up to the trial off-leash area program in 1996. The search returned 199 articles, but after removing duplicate articles, unrelated articles containing "off leash" as a metaphor for the unrestrained actions of humans, and articles about off-leash areas in neighboring cities, the remaining dataset consisted of 121 articles and editorials.

The majority of articles from the media search were published between 2001 and 2004 during the lead up to the establishment of the off-leash area network in 2003 and subsequent evaluations of the off-leash areas. 2001-2004 represents the most transformative period for policy regarding dogs in Portland's public spaces. The search yielded 53 editorials during this time period which present the richest dialogue for understanding the contours of the debate over off leash dogs and off-leash areas in Portland. These 53 editorials constitute the dataset for the thematic content analysis of the debate over the establishment of Portland's off-leash area network.

Thematic Analysis of Editorials

I conducted a three level thematic content analysis of 52 editorials published in *The Oregonian* between 2001 and 2004, and one additional editorial published in 1995

that presents an early argument in favor of establishing off-leash areas in Portland (see appendix B for the complete editorial analysis dataset). I used thematic analysis to identify patterns, organize, and interpret the editorial arguments into multiple categories of the public debate over OLAs in Portland (Saldaña 2009). The codes were derived from themes in prior research on dog parks to assess the establishment of Portland's off-leash area network in relation to other municipal dog parks documented in the literature (Boyatzis 1998). While certain themes were employed in ways not discussed in the literature, the broad concepts of the debate were aligned with previous research, city policy, and OLA advocacy documents.

In the first level of analysis I determined whether the editorial perspective was arguing for or against establishing or expanding the off-leash area network. Proponents and opponents consisted of both dog owners and non-dog owners each employing the same issue to argue the benefits or harms of dog parks from different perspectives. While the arguments within the debate are multifaceted, each editorial demonstrates a clear position either through recounting personal experiences, articulating advantages or disadvantages, and/or directly stating approval or disapproval in the practices of dogs in parks or the policy of off-leash areas. The distribution of the 53 editorials is 27 in favor of off-leash areas and 26 in opposition.

With the editorials coded for or against off-leash areas, the second level of analysis involved coding the arguments with topic themes derived from the literature on dog parks. Through the coding process I produced 194 quotations assigned to 17 different topic themes separated by proponents and opponents of off-leash areas (see appendix C for a complete code list). The codes were well distributed between the perspectives of the

OLA debate with 103 assigned to proponent editorial quotations and 91 to opponents. Coding provided a systematic view of the tensions between each topic theme perceived as either a benefit or harm of off-leash areas. In addition to clarity between perspectives, relationships between topics emerged suggesting categories of themes.

In the third level of analysis, I classified the 17 theme topics into five categories of contestation between proponents and opponents of off-leash areas (Saldaña 2009: 9). I identify the categories as a) the concerns of off-leash area users, b) the concerns of park users, c) the physical environment of parks and off-leash areas, d) the governance of off-leash areas, and e) dog parks in urban space. The boundaries of these categories are not fixed and many topics belong in multiple categories, but they represent the different scales and perspectives often combined within the disciplines of research on dog parks. For instance, the concerns of off-leash area users category aligns with the themes discussed in the landscape design and public health research examining ways to improve off-leash area user experiences.

The editorial pages of *The Oregonian* provide a range of perspectives and nuanced arguments for and against dogs in public space, but the topics and perspectives ultimately remain limited within the boundaries of the off-leash areas. Next I will explain my method for analytically situating off-leash areas within urban space and the changing neighborhoods in which they are located.

Complaint Analysis

Central to the debate over Portland's off-leash areas are the perceived harms and benefits of off leash dogs in public spaces. In order to spatialize the debate over off-leash areas, I conducted a two level analysis. First, I coded all park specific complaints of off leash dogs and mentions of dogs as a disturbance. Next, I analyzed the distribution of park complaints with patterns of racial and economic block group change in Portland from 2000 to 2015. The complaint codes serve as a proxy for the distribution of voices in the debate. Analyzed with patterns of neighborhood change, the complaint codes suggest areas where residents are most able to express their concerns over the perception of off leash dogs as a threat or disturbance.

For the first level of analysis, I coded two main datasets for park specific complaints of dogs. I coded the complete media search of all mentions of off leash dogs and off-leash areas published in *The Oregonian* from 1995 to 2016 mentioned above. In addition to news media, I coded staff agenda, notes, and community comments documented in the following three Portland Parks and Recreation planning documents.

1. Off-Leash Program Evaluation & Recommendations Report to Council: 12/04 (PP&R 2004) (72 pages). Portland Parks and Recreation Department tasked the Off-Leash Advisory Committee (OLAC) to assess the first year of the Off-Leash Area program. The OLAC drafted this report of their assessment for the Portland City Council.

2. *Off-Leash Program Advisory Group Meeting Notes: 03/10 - 06/12* (PP&R 2012) (41 pages). The Off-Leash Program Advisory Group served as continuation of the 2004 OLAC. This dataset contains documentation of over two years of monthly meeting minutes with community feedback discussing the distribution of park resources and the development of a strategy of education and enforcement that developed into the Leash and Scoop Compliance Program.

3. *Leash and Scoop Compliance Program Policies and Procedures: 09/16* (PP&R 2016) (26 pages). Portland Parks and Recreation's Leash and Scoop Policy dataset is contains differential education and enforcement strategies for general parks and low-compliance parks regarding off leash dogs.

The coding structure includes three components: a) SOURCE: whether the complaint was documented in media or planning documents; b) TYPE: whether the complaint regards off leash dogs or dogs as a disturbance; and c) PARK: to which park the complaint refers. Coding the media and planning documents produced 43 complaints associated with 18 different parks.

For the second level of analysis, I analyzed the distribution of park complaints in relation to patterns of racial and economic block group change throughout Portland from 2000 to 2015. I identified significant demographic change as areas that experienced an increase or decrease in both proportion of white population and median income from 2000 to 2015 at a rate greater than the change experienced in those indicators for the City of Portland overall. Block groups that experienced increases in both indicators are

classified as *increasing*, and block groups that experienced decreases are classified as *decreasing*. Block groups that experienced rates of change less than the city overall or opposite increases and decreases in whites and income are classified as *constant* (see Appendix C for a full description of demographic change methodology). I conducted the analysis of demographic change at the block group level because the concerns and complaints of off leash dogs exist at the park level; therefore, the research is best served by the smallest unit of analysis with reliable race and income data (Talen 1997; Landry and Chakraborty 2009).

Classifications of neighborhood change identify race and income as primary indicators of affluence and poverty (Bates 2013; Goetz et al 2015). I omitted other common indicators for assessing neighborhood change such as educational attainment, tenure/homeownership rates and house values. The margin of error on educational attainment rates in Portland is too wide at the block group level for American Community Survey estimates to be a reliable data source. Homeownership rates and house values are highly correlated with race and income in Portland. By incorporating housing variables, I could produce a block group change typology containing multiple degrees of increases and decreases, however, all the block groups remain within their original categories of change. Moreover, race and income are the central variables producing disparities in the distribution of people and resources across urban areas.

I do not incorporate race as a direct variable capable of explaining the distribution of people. Rather, race is a proxy for how processes of structural racism determine distributions of people, services, and opportunities (Anderson 2010). Formal and informal conceptions of race are seemingly naturalized in neighborhood space which

serves to produce and reinforce inequitable racialized outcomes and the racialization of urban space in the United States (powell 2007). I identify whiteness as the measure for this research to align with my expectations of finding a relationship between off-leash areas and increasing racially and economically privileged areas.

The Oregonian (www.oregonlive.com) is Portland's largest newspaper; therefore, it is the most accessible, the most archived, and arguably the most influential in shaping public opinion and local decision makers. It provides a rich source of editorial opinions on dogs in parks and public spaces throughout the establishment of Portland's off-leash area network. However, all of this does not mean that the entire story can be found within its pages. Despite the range of opinion expressed across the Oregonian, the perspectives are limited to the norms of paper's readership and editorial board.

The use of a single data source for the media analysis is a primary limitation of this study. The online databases for the Willamette Week (www.wweek.com), The Portland Mercury (www.portlandmercury.com), and Oregon Public Broadcasting (www.opb.org) provide limited results so I did not include them. These sources could offer alternative perspectives to the Oregonian; however, based on the few article results from website searches, these media sources did not actually present significantly different perspectives from those found in the Oregonian. Due to time constraints and the large editorial dataset from the Oregonian, I did not contact local media outlets or community newsletters directly to inquire about archived texts. It is important to acknowledge this limitation and the sources where more specific concerns around dogs in public parks could be raised.

There are two routes for future media analysis that may provide more specific concerns and debates around dogs in Portland's parks. First, according to the City of Portland's Office of Neighborhood Involvement, Portland has 95 neighborhood associations. Many of these associations have newsletters, email newsletters, and Facebook pages with content addressing neighborhood specific issues. Portland's neighborhood associations present a starting point for a rich dataset on local politics, but too daunting of a task given the time constraints of this project. Second, Portland's Black newspapers such as the Skanner (www.theskanner.com) and the Portland Observer (www.portlandobserver.com) could provide Black perspectives on dogs in public space and neighborhood change that are addressed in detail throughout North Portland's Restorative Listening Project (Drew 2011), but missing from the journalism and editorials in the Oregonian.

Conclusion

The qualitative analyses outlined in my methodology are intended to be exploratory. I do not present off-leash areas as an explanation for neighborhood change in Portland. However, I argue that the public conversation and research on dog parks is limited in its approach to evaluating the potential impacts of off-leash areas. Dog parks are urban spatial amenities, and through this exploratory analysis I seek to highlight the existing urban processes in which dog parks have become entangled.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

The Off-Leash Area Debate

Through thematic analysis, I systematically categorized and evaluated the public debate over the establishment of off-leash areas (OLAs) in Portland, Oregon. The dataset (appendix A) consists of 53 editorials published in *The Oregonian* between 2001 and 2004 (including one editorial published in 1995). Community members employ issues around dogs in public space in various strategies to argue for or against the establishment and expansion of OLAs in Portland. I coded 194 quotations using 17 thematic codes derived from the literature on dog parks. The codes were well divided between the two perspectives of the OLA debate: 103 from proponent editorials and 91 from opponents. I identified five categories from commonalities among the 17 initial themes. Categorizing the themes provided a new lens through which to compare the different facets, concerns, experiences, and scales represented within the editorials.

The first category compiles the direct concerns of OLA users. These concerns include mentions of dog owner communities as well as the health and well-being of dogs. This category aligns most closely with the research seeking to prove and improve the benefits of dog parks. The second category represents the concerns of other park users, such as people relaxing or playing sports, parents, children, the elderly, and taxpaying citizens. The literature often simplifies the debate into dog owners in favor of OLAs and non-dog owners in opposition. It is sometimes difficult to determine from the text if a perspective is from a dog owner or not, but not all non-dog owners are opposed to dogs in parks. The perspectives of dog owners who chose not to visit dog parks are

underrepresented in the literature and editorials, however, the concerns of other park users include the perspective of dog owners who oppose OLAs due to their negative experiences with off leash dogs posing a risk to their leashed dogs.

The third category collects mentions of landscape, natural habitat, and other aspects of the physical environment of parks and OLAs. The fourth and largest category brings together the governance issues of producing and maintaining OLAs. This is the broadest and richest category, and includes themes of responsibility, legality, and the enforcement of laws. The final category situates OLAs within the urban context within which they exist. Urban concerns raised in the editorials include mentions of housing, sustainability, and displacement, but they are the least cited themes in the dataset. The public debate over the establishment of Portland's system of OLAs documented in the editorial section of *The Oregonian* is more nuanced than represented in the research and advocacy literature on dog parks. However, while nuanced, ultimately the debate is primarily dog-centric in nature. The perspectives are concerned with whether or not dogs belong in parks without much consideration of the ways in which the spatial category of the dog parks interact with broader urban processes within the context of Portland's increasing population and changing neighborhoods.

The contours of the debate over Portland OLAs in the editorials center on conflicting notions of ethics and responsibility. OLA proponents present the provision of dog parks as a moral imperative through three framings. First, dog owners appeal to the morality of readers by suggesting a parallel between the emotional connection of the parent-child relationship and the pet-owner relationship. The second framing is an equity argument related to the first framing which suggests parallels between the spaces of

children's playgrounds and dog's off-leash areas. The last framing is an argument that dog owners feel a responsibility to provide ways to meet the exercise and socialization needs of their dogs for their overall well-being. They express feeling morally obligated to run their dogs off leash regardless of whether or not their local park contains an off-leash area. In combination, these framings serve as a moral rationale and justification for the official provision or unofficial appropriation of space for dogs. Running dogs in non-OLA parks is presented as a tactic for asserting rights to city space as taxpayers and dog owners, as well as evidence demonstrating a need for city officials to provide park space for off-leash exercise and socialization. On the other hand, OLA opponents interpret these actions as unequivocally illegal and irresponsible. They frame dogs fundamentally as a disturbance in city parks, therefore, OLAs are an imposition on other park users and incapable of solving the problem of dogs in public spaces. The actions of OLA advocates are framed as assertions of dog's rights; one editorial labels pro-OLA politics as a form "dog-ocracy."

Opponents describe issues related to OLAs with language along a range of intensity, which suggests varying degrees of tolerance to dogs in parks, however, the message is uniform that they see dogs as a disturbance to the enjoyment and safety of other park users. While the opposition message tends to be uniform, proponents employ the same concepts as opponents to argue why there should be OLAs in city parks through three separate perspectives or strategies. First, proponents deny common claims against dogs in parks. For example, they argue that dog owners always pick up after their dogs. Second, they will turn the argument around on opponents. In keeping with the previous example, dog owners will accuse other park users of leaving trash and dirty diapers in the

park. The last strategy involves reasoning with opponents in their own terms why dog parks will address a particular issue. In the case of dog poop, it is argued that OLAs will improve the situation in parks by creating a centralized location equipped with bags and receptacles to minimize waste throughout parks. With the exception of the limited category of urban issues, each of the other four categories contain at least one issue where proponents employ this full range of perspectives and strategies in their arguments in favor of OLAs.

Concerns of OLA Users

The concerns of OLA users relate to the well-being of dogs and dog owners who use OLAs, consisting of mentions of the socialization, exercise, and safety of dogs as well as the health, well-being, and sense of community that OLAs provide dog owners. The concerns of OLA users are closely aligned with the perceived benefits of dog parks. These benefits are the subject of the public health and landscape design research which seeks to improve the experience of dog parks for users and their dogs. Roughly 23% of editorial mentions in the dataset (44 quotations) pertain to the direct concerns of OLA users. Of those 44 mentions, a large majority (~73%) are from OLA proponents.

There is a rhetorical connection between the socialization and exercise of dogs both in the literature and among the arguments of OLA proponents in the dataset. Six out of the nine proponents who employ socialization also include exercise in the same sentence. For instance, “we have a right for some space in the parks for exercise and socialization.” Proponents offer reasons for why it is important to have spaces to socialize

their pets: a) well socialized dogs are less threatening to people and b) socialization decreases “the likelihood that they will attack other dogs.” The single OLA proponent to employ socialization in their argument also made the connection by relating exercise with “healthy, well socialized and good tempered” dogs.

There is a tension between how notions of responsibility are framed in relation to the exercise of pets. While OLA proponents express a feeling of personal responsibility for the well-being of their pets, opponents frame dogs as a responsibility that many pet owners are incapable of meeting. One dog owner expresses “feel[ing] a responsibility to walk or exercise [their] canine companion daily.” OLA proponents employ the narrative that urban dogs require exercise and socialization to serve as evidence and a rationale for why cities need to provide dog parks, as well as a moral justification for running dogs off leash in parks without OLAs until they are provided. This narrative is countered by opponents who argue that dogs do not need to be off leash in order to get exercise, one of which suggests that running on leash is healthier because both dogs and owners get exercise.

Related to the exercise and socialization of dogs is the interest pet owners have in the general well-being of their dogs. OLA opponents who discuss concerns around dog’s health and safety are dog owners who choose not use OLAs because they perceive them as unsafe. They mention “attack,” “harm,” “charges,” “confrontation,” and unleashed dogs to express a single concern that OLAs put their leashed dogs at risk of attack from unleashed dogs. This opponent message is countered by OLA proponents employing notions of dog health and safety in three ways. First, proponents deny claims that OLAs are bad for the well-being of dogs by asserting that dog owners create a healthy and safe

environment: “dog owners... are courteous and respect a clean environment for themselves and their dogs.” Second, one opponent turns the argument around to suggest that well socialized dogs are not a threat to dogs, rather “rabid anti-dog people” are a threat to dogs. This argument is in reference to the poisoned sausages in Laurelhurst Park that killed 15 dogs in 2003. Lastly, proponents reason with opponents on their terms for why there should be OLAs. One editorial argues that no one should have to fear for the safety of their loved ones.

Notions of community are prominent in the dog park research and advocacy literature, yet mentions of community in the editorial dataset are among the least of all the themes. The few mentions are primarily proponent’s vague references to a community of dog owners. Proponents loosely express a sense of community through use of language such as “visiting,” “camaraderie,” and sharing a community interest. There were no arguments for the ways in which dogs or OLAs can foster a sense of community amongst dog owners or how users build community or friendships beyond the OLA. Two contradictory perspectives employ notions of community in a broader sense, yet not in terms of developing a shared sense of place or identity. Rather, they are both used to critique the opposition for not meeting the responsibility of being a community member. One OLA proponent argues that the responsibility of a successful OLA cannot rest entirely on dog owners because “this is suppose to be a community,” and an OLA opponent argues that she walks her dog on leash because she wants “him to be a responsible community member.”

In summary, there is a strong rhetorical connection between the socialization and exercise of dogs, and a tension between perspectives of responsibility for exercising pets.

Although notions of community are not well articulated by OLA proponents, arguments regarding the concerns of OLA users and their dogs suggest that some sense of community is fostered around the shared interest of pet ownership within the space of the dog park. This space is valuable to dog owners because they care deeply about their companion animals and believe that exercise and socialization is significant for their dog's well-being. The concerns of OLA users is the most central theme to the debate over dog parks. Next I will discuss findings related to the concerns of general park users.

Concerns of Park Users

The concerns of park users relate to perceptions of how dogs in parks and other public spaces impact human uses of these spaces. Park user concerns consist of mentions of the safety and enjoyment of other park users, especially children and the elderly, being compromised by the presence of dogs, as well as mentions of the types of urban services tax paying citizens should fund and enjoy. The taxpayer arguments are framed as a contest between services for dogs (dog parks) and services for children (playgrounds and schools). The concerns of park users are the second most cited thematic category with roughly 25% of all codes closely split between proponents and opponents of OLAs, 53% and 47% respectively.

OLA opponents are uniformly against dogs in parks because they perceive dogs as a disturbance to other park users. Dogs disturbing other park users is the highest cited single theme in the dataset. 13 of the 15 opponents do not recall their personal experiences with dogs in parks, however, they invoke the vulnerability and fear of

children and the elderly to argue how dogs are a disturbance to park users. If an OLA is established “it will not be safe to send your kids to the park.” The remaining opponents threaten that they will no longer visit parks if dogs are legally permitted. Opponents use terms across a range of intensity to express how dogs disturb other park users, such as “attack,” “fear,” “intimidation,” “diminished enjoyment,” and affected quality of life. This continuum of complaints suggests a variation in tolerance to dogs in parks, but it is certain that dogs are perceived as a disturbance to other park users.

The opponent message is clear that dogs are a disturbance, but OLA proponents address the concerns of other park users in three different ways. First, they deny the common claim that dogs are a disturbance: “my kids and I are never bothered by dogs.” Second, opponents turn the argument around to suggest that other park users, such as hazardous bicyclists and “anti-dog people,” are a disturbance and imposition on dog owners’ park experiences. Lastly, proponents reason with opponents on their terms for why there should be OLAs. A proponent argues that providing OLAs will improve the experience of other park users because dogs will have a dedicated space to run.

OLA proponents express that as taxpayers they are entitled to urban services. One argument begins, “as a taxpayer and a dog owner...” Wielding their status as taxpayers is used to legitimate claims to public space for their dogs. There is also a rhetorical connection between being childless and taxpayers in the arguments of OLA proponents. Five out of seven proponents mention being taxpayers and not having children in order to argue that if their taxes pay for children’s playgrounds, they should also pay for dog parks. OLA opponents do not compare dog parks to children’s playgrounds overall, however, one childless and dogless perspective is concerned that their taxes already pay

for public schools and will be required to pay for dog parks. One proponent wishes that dog owners would appreciate the OLAs “already provided at taxpayer expense,” while another does not want their taxes to fund public dog parks specifically because of their negative experiences with dogs in parks.

OLA Proponents invoke similarities between owner-dog and parent-child relationships as a moral appeal and justification for the need to provide OLAs. One proponent claims that “many of us do not have children but have the close pet-owner bond.” Proponents invoke parent-child relationships in two ways. First, proponents reason with opponents on their terms for why there should be OLAs. In an attempt to relate with the feelings parents have for their kids, one editorial explains how “dogs need to run free at some time during the day to expel energy, in much the same way children need to have their free time playing in close proximity to their parents.” A proponent also turns the argument around to suggest a parallel between dog poop and baby diapers through complaints of “dirty diapers tossed in the woods by irresponsible parents.” OLA opponents express no sympathy for the pet relationship. One bluntly states that “children are our future, not dogs,” while another writes, “I understand that many people consider their pets to be part of their families, but a pet is still an animal and therefore not entitled to the rights of a human being.”

In summary, opponents are numerous and uniformly against dogs in parks because they are perceived as a disturbance. Opponents employ a rhetorical strategy of citing the fears and concerns of children and the elderly, rather than recalling personal experiences with dogs in parks. Arguments paralleling parent-child and pet relationships are quick to get analytically cloudy. The relationship may be symbolic, but it is real for

those who experience it. However, debates over the provision of dog parks are fundamentally a human political struggle, and opponents insistence on comparing the rights of dogs with the rights of children mischaracterize the struggle.

The Physical Environment of Parks and Off-Leash Areas

The physical environment of parks and OLAs relates to perceptions of how dogs interact with the built and natural spaces of the city. Concerns around the physical environment consist of mentions of natural habitat, wildlife, park and homeowner landscapes, as well as complaints of dog poop. The physical environment is the second least cited thematic category with roughly 13% of all mentions. The low count of mentions can be attributed to a lack of OLA proponents employing the physical aspects of park landscapes as a benefit in arguments in favor of dog parks. Dogs running through parks create wear and tear on the landscape, but how proponents and opponents of OLAs debate the impacts of dogs on other aspects of the environment is limited and unclear.

Six opponents of OLAs argue concisely that dogs “erode,” “denude,” “ruin,” and “destroy” parks, yards, and other landscapes. No proponents mention the impact of dogs on physical landscapes. Mentions of dogs threatening wildlife are limited as well. Without providing an example, one opponent claims that “dogs are notoriously hard on wildlife,” while another cites runoff from an OLA polluting a nearby creek. The only two OLA proponent arguments employing wildlife are contradictory. One claims to have never seen a dog chase wildlife, while the other argues that the temptation for dogs to chase wildlife is too great and should simply be accepted.

Dog poop is a unique concern. Scooping issues could belong to any of the thematic groups, but I have categorized dog poop as physical because both proponents and opponents simply refer to it as debris on the ground. There are different arguments for the range of potential threats posed by the debris, but it often begins as part of the landscape, for instance, “the dog debris left in city parks diminishes everyone’s enjoyment.” Seven opponents argue that dog poop is a messy health and safety violation, and against the law.

While the message of OLA opponents is a uniform condemnation of dog poop, OLA proponents employ dog poop in three different strategies. First, there are denials of common claims about dog poop in city parks: “I rarely see dog messes on the ground,” and “most owners do pick up dog poop.” Second, one opponent turns the argument around to suggest that “most of the litter is left by humans, not dogs.” Lastly, proponents reason with opponents on their terms for why there should be OLAs. One editorial argues that OLAs improve scoop issues because dogs will be centralized and better prepared to clean up after dogs: “Dogs will poop somewhere. Better in a dog park equipped with bags and garbage bins than elsewhere.”

In summary, with the exception of the perennially contentious issue of dog poop, concerns over the physical environment of parks and OLAs is under represented in the dataset. I hesitate to lump wildlife and natural habitat into the physical attributes of parks. However, natural environments and wildlife play larger roles in controversies over dog beaches in coastal areas and they seem to be less of a concern in this case due to limited mentions in the dataset. Next I will turn to the formal and informal laws and politics governing the dog park.

Governance of Off-Leash Areas

Governance relates to the politics of producing and maintaining OLAs, and consists of mentions of the formal and informal laws and norms of dogs in public space as well as the governance and enforcement of those laws and norms. Governance is the most cited thematic category with roughly 31% of all codes split between proponents and opponents of OLAs at 45% and 55% respectively.

The self-governance of OLAs by users is employed in similar ways by both sides of the debate. Proponents and opponents see the OLA network as a self-supporting system in terms of production and maintenance, however, there is a tension in the debate over how the parks should be funded. Proponents perceive themselves as advocates; they value fundraising for amenities and volunteering their time to maintain OLAs. Opponents do not acknowledge this advocacy work, and argue that dog owners pay a tax or user fee to establish and maintain OLAs.

Central to the governance of OLAs is the notion of responsibility consisting of the formal and informal guidelines of acceptable behavior established for pet owners in OLAs, parks, and public spaces citywide. Off leash dogs are the core issue of responsibility. Opponents view irresponsible dog owners as a perennial problem that that will not be assuaged through providing OLAs because dog owners are seen as “selfish,” “irresponsible,” and in need of obedience training.

Proponents counter this argument by employing responsibility from three different perspectives. First, there are denials of the claim that dog owners are irresponsible. In addition to ensuring their dogs are on leash and well behaved,

proponents describe the use of peer education and peer pressure to persuade fellow dog owners to be more responsible: “dog owners regularly encourage their peers to abide by park rules and be responsible for their pets.” Second, one opponent turns the argument around to suggest that “non-dog-owning park users” must also take responsibility for the success of integrating OLAs into Portland’s park system. Lastly, proponents reason with opponents on their terms for why there should be OLAs. Proponents acknowledge that “all dog owners need to be responsible for their pets,” and argue that peer education and self-governed OLAs produce responsible pet owners.

Notions of responsibility and responsible pet ownership are invoked in relation to many of the themes addressed in the OLA debate. However, the poisoning of 15 dogs in Laurelhurst Park during the summer of 2003 represents a boiling point in the conflict over OLAs and the deaths incited especially vitriolic rhetoric around notions of responsibility. OLA opponents argue that irresponsible dog owners provoked the poisoner and the dogs are dead because they were off leash. One opponent believes that “the pet owners have asked for trouble by defying the leash laws,” while another claims that “irresponsible pet ownership is what precipitated this wacko’s actions [and] responsible ownership may have prevented the same.” On the other hand, OLA proponents hold city and parks officials responsible for the deaths of the dogs because there were no off leash areas: “dogs were off leash and vulnerable because they were not provided designated park space in which to run.”

Both perspectives acknowledge an increase of dogs off leash in Portland city parks. However, whereas opponents argue that off leash dogs are an illegal disturbance, proponents argue the issue is cause to expand OLAs. Opponents employ notions of

illegality when describing the actions, spaces, and people involved with unleashed dogs in parks. They refer to dogs off leash as “not just illegal but also rude,” informal dog parks as “illegal off-leash areas,” and “legal dog owners” as dog owners who obey leash laws to imply a category of illegal dog owners. Notions of illegality center all opponents’ arguments that leash laws need greater enforcement. They demand that officials “take action,” “uphold the law,” and “follow through” because there is “no recourse” for victims of dogs running off leash with “impunity.” One threatens vigilante enforcement: “if the county and the city will not enforce the law, maybe we can shame people into keeping their pets on a leash.”

On the other hand, OLA proponents argue that leash laws “curtail the ability of people or dogs to enjoy the park,” and cite that “more and more people are running their dogs unleashed in Portland’s parks already” in order to demonstrate a need for OLAs. They argue that frustrated dog owners will continue to “ignore” the law, “flout the law,” and “obey the law only when it’s convenient” until OLAs are provided. Four of the nine proponents acknowledge that leash laws should to be enforced, but also argue that enforcement must to be coupled with expanded OLAs. “Until the city and county can afford supervised off-leash areas in designated locations with adequate facilities... there is no alternative to having law-abiding citizens respect the leash law and accept responsibility for their dogs.” OLA proponents maintain a moral justification to meet the needs of their companion animals and threaten to illegally claim space until it is legal provided.

In summary, proponents and opponents both see OLAs as a self-supporting system, but they are divided over their perceptions of each other’s responsibilities and the

role of OLAs in soothing tensions around dogs in city parks. Where opponents view the actions of dog owners as illegal and irresponsible, proponents views the same actions as tactics in the moral struggle to claim space for their pets.

Dog Parks in Urban Space

The urban concerns of dog parks relate to broader citywide processes and institutions of development, housing, and social inequality. Dog parks are an urban phenomenon, yet the debates around OLAs are inadequately situated within an urban context. Urban concerns represent the lowest mentions in the dataset with roughly 8% of the editorial quotations. The range of urban concerns addressed in the debate is limited, and the issues of housing, displacement, and sustainability that are raised are narrow in scope and dog-centric.

The fundamental urban concerns of housing and sustainability are employed superficially by both perspectives of the OLA debate. One OLA opponent cites back yards as “a wonderful off-leash area for one’s dog,” while others urge dog owners to “buy a house with a back yard” or “move to the country and live on a farm.” No proponents employ housing in their arguments, but one notes that the conflict over dogs in parks has “tainted Portland’s famous livability.” Two proponents argue for more OLAs to reduce dog owners driving across town producing more “pollution” and “greenhouse gases” in order to exercise their dogs. An opponent counters this sentiment by simply stating, “sorry, folks, every dog owner can’t be within a dog-walk of a dog park,” while

others concerned with Portland's pedestrian-friendly reputation question whether how many people will choose to drive instead of walk "out of fear of loose dogs."

OLA proponents characterize dog owners as desirable upgraded park users over pathologized lower class park users. The displacement of the homeless and other park users perceived as deviant is uncritically celebrated. There are no opponent perspectives, but five proponents, in ways similar to how opponents frame dogs in parks, situate dog owners as model citizens in relation to "drug and alcohol users," dog exercise in relation to issues of mugging, rape, and murder, and dog poop in relation to "broken liquor and beer bottles, dirty diapers, cigarette butts, prophylactics and used hypodermic needles... [and] graffiti." One OLA proponent simply states, "when the people and their dogs are pushed out, the drunks and transients move in, and the safe, friendly atmosphere of the park is destroyed."

In summary, perspectives situating OLAs in the broader urban context within which they exist are the least cited themes of the analysis. The critical urban issues of housing, sustainability, and displacement are addressed narrowly, superficially, and in way intended to deride opposing perspectives of dogs in parks.

Conclusion

I conducted a thematic analysis of the documented public debate over the establishment of Portland's OLA network. The editorials published in *The Oregonian* maintained a balance of proponents and opponents of OLAs. While the range of perspectives was broad, the arguments remained dog-centric in their narrow focus on the

potential impact of dog parks. In the next section I situate the Portland's off-leash area network within the city to explore the relationship between dog parks and neighborhood change.

Dog Parks and Neighborhood Change

Portland's off-leash areas (OLAs) are well-distributed throughout 30 neighborhoods across the city, but all neighborhoods are not uniform across the off-leash area network. To better understand Portland's dog parks within the context of the city I conducted two exploratory analyses. In the first analysis, I overlaid a map of Portland's off-leash areas with a map of racial and economic change from 2000-2015 to examine the relationship between neighborhood change and the distribution of dog park. In the second analysis, I coded the distribution of off leash dog complaints printed in news media and parks department planning documents. I overlaid a map of parks mentioned in complaints with the pattern of racial and economic change from 2000 to 2015 to explore the relationship between neighborhood change and the distribution of documented concerns about dogs in public space throughout Portland's park system.

Off-Leash Area Distribution

While the history of dog parks focuses on individual off-leash areas as the result of local advocacy groups, Portland's 33 off-leash areas were designated within a single citywide policy. Neighborhood associations and community input were involved in the process, but the full citywide distribution provides an opportunity to explore siting

decisions and how neighborhoods have changed since the off-leash areas were established. See figure 2 for off-leash area distribution and patterns of racial and economic change from 2000 to 2015. As discussed in chapter three, the pattern of racial and economic movement is most pronounced in neighborhoods east and west of 82nd Avenue. The majority of off-leash areas (70%) are located west of 82nd Avenue in neighborhoods that have experienced increases in white populations and median household incomes or areas that experienced insignificant population changes but have historically been racially and economically advantaged.

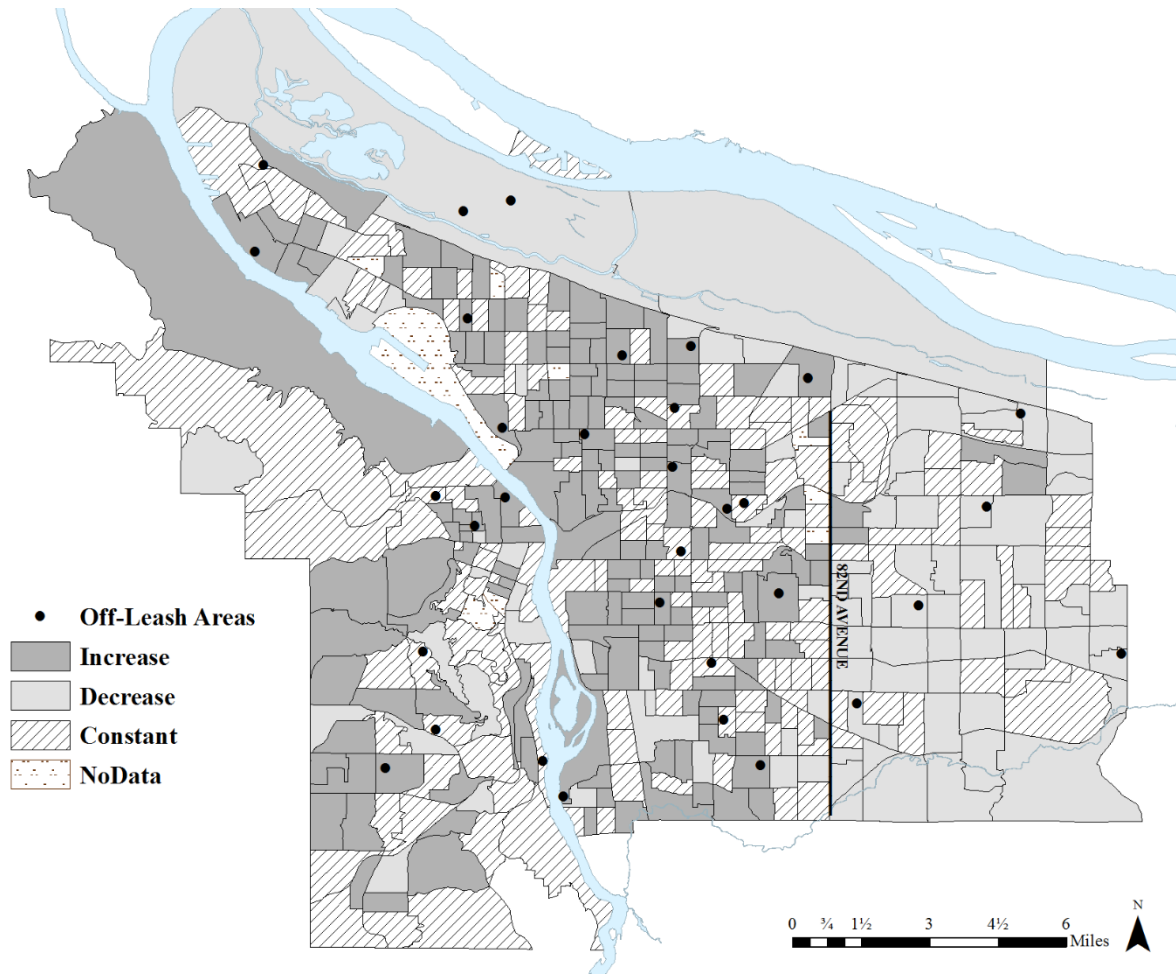


Figure 2: Off-Leash Areas and Block Group Demographic Change in Portland, Oregon (2000-2015). Proportion of non-Hispanic white population and median household income. Data source: 2000 decennial U.S. Census data and 2015 ACS 5-year estimates.

16 of Portland’s 33 off-leash areas (49%) are located in block groups which experienced increases in both white population and median household incomes at rates greater than the city overall. These OLAs are all located west of 82nd Avenue in neighborhoods consisting of increasingly affluent centrally located block groups. 10 of Portland’s OLAs (30%) are located in areas identified as *constant* because they experienced insignificant change or opposite increases and decreases in race and income change. Though constant block groups are distributed throughout neighborhoods east and

west of 82nd Avenue, none of the off-leash areas in *constant* block groups were located east of 82nd. *Constant* block groups experienced the least demographic change from 2000 to 2015, however, seven out of the ten OLAs located in *constant* block groups began with higher proportions of whites and median incomes than Portland overall in 2000. The lowest counts of off-leash areas (21%) are located in block groups that experienced increases in people of color and decreases in median household incomes.

The City of Portland overall experienced minor decreases in proportions of both whites and median incomes from 2000 to 2015 (see table 1 for average proportions and percentage change for white population and median household incomes for all three change categories and Portland overall.). The proportion of white population citywide dropped 5.2% from 75.5% to 71.6% by 2015. Median incomes citywide demonstrated a similarly trend downward from ~\$57k to ~\$55k adjusted to 2015 dollars. While the citywide trends reveal small decreases, an analysis of the group average change experienced by the three categories of racial and economic change (increase, constant, and decrease) suggests further disparities between neighborhoods with and without parks containing off-leash areas.

Table 1: Average proportions of white population and median household income change for categories of demographic change for block groups containing off-leash areas (2000-2015). Average change calculated for the three categories of change. The City of Portland figures are census data points, not averages. All income figures adjusted to 2015 dollars. Data source: 2000 decennial U.S. Census data and 2015 ACS 5-year estimates.

Change Categories	White 2000	White 2015	White Change	Income 2000	Income 2015	Income Change
<i>Increase</i>	74.3%	81.2%	9.3%	\$59,516	\$71,882	20.8%
<i>Constant</i>	84.3%	82.3%	-2.4%	\$83,433	\$82,363	-1.3%
<i>Decrease</i>	78.7%	60.3%	-23.4%	\$63,183	\$47,642	-24.6%
<i>Portland</i>	75.5%	71.6%	-5.2%	\$57,107	\$55,003	-3.7%

The average racial and economic shift between the block groups that experienced increases and decreases suggests substantial demographic change in Portland over the 15 year study period. The block groups that experienced decreases in both whites and median incomes during the study period actually began with higher figures than the block groups that experienced increases. For instance, in 2000, the average white and income figures for increase block groups are 74.3% and \$59,516 respectively, and they are 78.7% and \$63,183 for decrease block groups. The average figures for block groups that experienced decreases show a 23.4% drop in white population along with a 24.6% drop in median income. In other words, while the increase block groups experienced increases greater than the city overall, it is the decrease block groups that experienced the greatest change of all categories during the study period.

Block groups on either side of 82nd Avenue experienced various degrees of demographic change over the 15 year study period, but it is important to mention the block groups that could be overlooked in an analysis strictly focused on change. The block groups identified as constant are exclusively in neighborhoods west of 82nd Avenue, and half (five) of the ten block groups had proportions of white populations higher than 90%, and median incomes greater than \$100,000 in 2000. The average figures for constant block groups are the highest for both white population and median incomes in 2000 and 2015, and they experienced the least change over that 15 year period. In other words, the constant blocks started more advantaged than the other block group categories and maintained those advantages.

These patterns of average change in the block group demographics from 2000 to 2015 support findings that suggest an influx of affluent white households in Portland's

central core neighborhoods and the displacement of lower income people of color to neighborhoods east of 82nd Avenue. Half of Portland's off-leash areas (49%) are located in increasingly affluent areas, and another 21% of off-leash areas are located in historically affluent block groups that have remained affluent, resulting in 70% of Portland's off-leash areas located within racially and economically advantaged areas by 2015.

Complaints of Dogs in Parks

The presence of dogs in public space is a contentious issue, but concerns over off leash dogs are not uniform across Portland's neighborhoods. I coded news media and parks department planning documents for complaints of off leash dogs mentioned as specific parks to serve as a proxy for where concerns over off leash dogs may likely be voiced. See figure 3 for a map of parks mentioned in complaints with the distribution of racial and economic change from 2000 to 2015. The distribution of complaints is highly concentrated in affluent areas; 95% of complaints of off leash dogs mentioning specific parks are located in block groups that experienced increases in white populations and median household incomes or areas that experienced insignificant population changes but have historically been racially and economically advantaged.

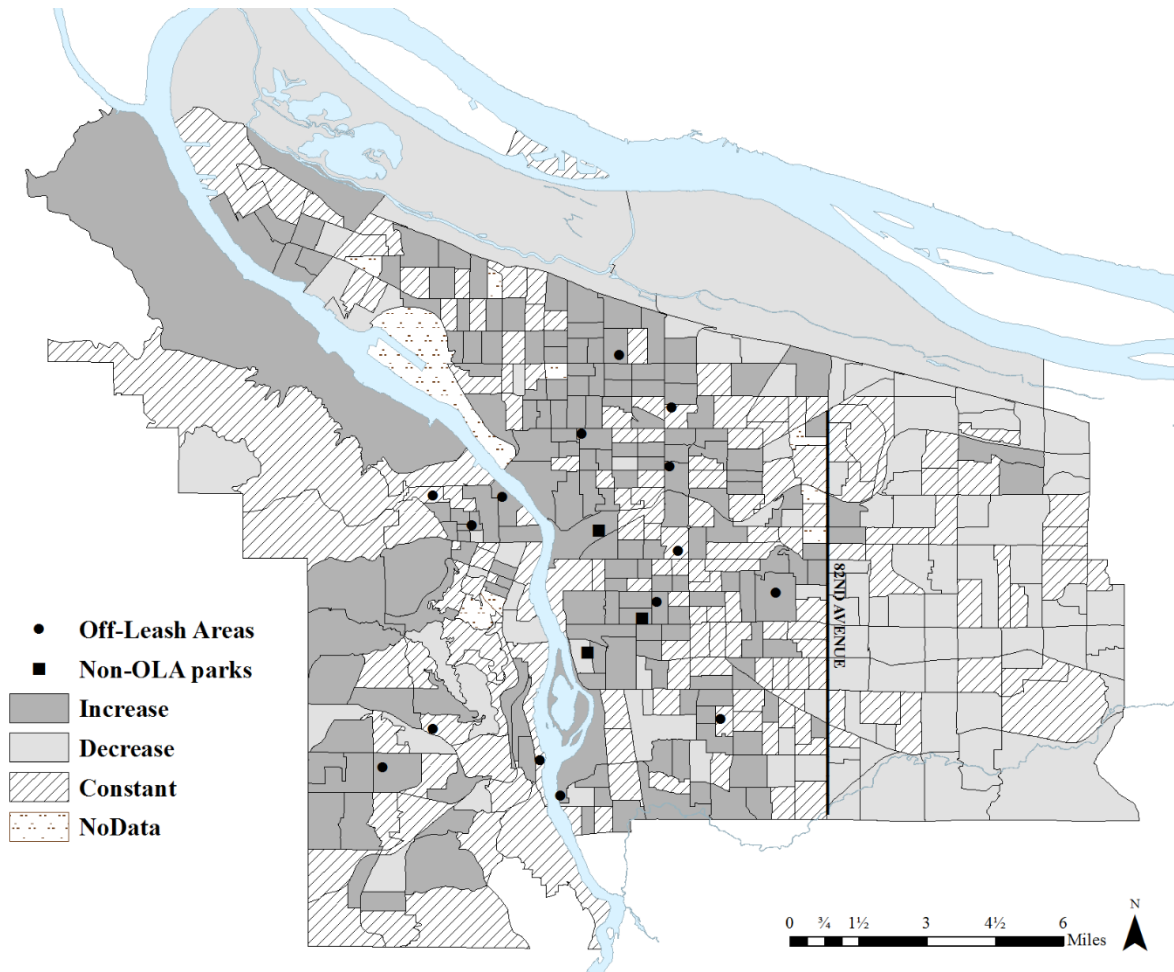


Figure 3: Complaints of Off Leash Dogs and Block Group Demographic Change in Portland, Oregon (2000-2015). Proportion of non-Hispanic white population and median household income. Data source: 2000 decennial U.S. Census data and 2015 ACS 5-year estimates.

The dataset contained 43 complaints of off leash dogs mentioned within 18 different parks. 11 of the complaint parks (61%) were in block groups that experienced increases in both proportion of whites and median household incomes. 32 of the 43 complaints (74.4%) were in mentioned within those 11 parks. Six parks with complaints were in block groups identified as constant. These six block groups did not experience significant demographic change from 2000 to 2015, however, five of the six were racially and economically advantaged areas in 2000 with indicators far exceeding city averages.

Whereas the proportion of Portland's white population in 2000 was ~75% and the median income was \$40,146, all six of the constant block groups had white populations greater than 80%, and three block groups were over 90% white in 2000. Five of the six constant block groups had median incomes ranging from \$51,731 to \$88,560.

One park was mentioned in a complaint located in an area that experienced decreases in whites and income. The complaint mentioned Brooklyn Park, which is not an off-leash area, but it is in a centrally located area surrounded by *increase* block groups on all sides of it. There were no mentions of parks east of 82nd Avenue. Because there were no complaints does not mean that there were no off leash dogs or that they are not a threat to visitors of parks east of 82nd Avenue. Situating dog parks within the context of urban space is important because off-leash areas are a recent example in a long history of urban services which have been differentially distributed to neighborhoods based on racialized and class-based conceptions of need and value. The stark disparity in park complaints is informed by a history of neglect and hostility experienced by low-income residents and people of color that has shaped their trust and ability to voice their concerns.

Conclusion

The findings from these exploratory analyses of off-leash areas and complaints of off leash dogs provide a rationale for future research to look beyond the boundaries of the off-leash areas and situate dog parks within the city. 70% of off-leash areas are located in areas that are either historically or increasingly advantaged, and 95% of complaints of off

leash dogs are also concentrated in these areas. The explanations for these disparities are unclear, but they suggest the need for a new approach to thinking about dog parks.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

The editorial debate over Portland's off-leash areas published in *The Oregonian* offers a broad range of arguments for and against dogs in public space. While the editorials offer more nuanced perspectives than those presented in the literature on dog parks, the themes of the Portland debate align with topics from the literature. Morgan and Urbanik's analysis of dog park politics (2013) suggests that the debate is divided over whether or not people want dogs in public space; it is an argument between "those wishing to see a more-than-human cityscape and those who feel animals should be kept as a controlled, private affair (300)." My findings from the Portland debate suggest a need to pay attention to themes related to responsibility.

Through three layers of thematic analysis I distilled the Portland debate down to conflicting notions of responsible pet ownership. The dominant framing of responsible pet ownership involves conceptions of appropriate pet owner behavior in complying with formal leash and scoop laws as well as informal courtesies of the dog park. A conflicting notion of responsible pet ownership involves dog owners feeling a sense of responsibility for meeting the perceived exercise needs of their companion animals in urban environments. This sense of responsibility leads some dog owners to run their dogs off-leash which simultaneously provides exercise and demonstrates need for expanding off-leash areas.

In this chapter I will discuss the themes of the Portland debate in relation to the literature on dog parks. Due to the centrality of themes related to responsibility, Iris Marion Young's (2011) distinction between personal and public responsibility is useful for discussing the limitations of the Portland debate's narrow focusing on the physical

spaces of off-leash areas at the expense of the broader urban processes in which dog parks are embedded. Personal responsibility leads to accusations of irresponsibility and public responsibility leads to debate and intervention in unjust structures and processes. Building on the themes in the literature, I discuss how the relationship between dog parks and neighborhood change suggests a need to expand the debate and research agenda around dog parks.

The Benefits of Dog Parks

Arguments around the benefits of dog parks are central to the Portland debate and closely align with the questions and assumptions of dog park research (Lee et al. 2009). The benefits of dog parks are identified as exercise and socialization for dogs and fostering community among dog owners, and arguments regarding these three topics arise primarily (82%) from the perspective of Portland's off-leash area proponents. This perspective makes intuitive sense; it is difficult for off-leash area opponents to claim that off-leash areas do not offer exercise or that it is not beneficial to dogs. However, there is scarce questioning of the universal benefit of dog parks in the debate and literature.

The Portland debate differs from the literature in mentions of dog's health and safety that question the benefits of dog parks. The dog park literature addresses safety in two ways: a) dog parks are perceived as safe places for dogs and their owners in terms of public safety (Krohe 2005: 25; Harnik & Bridges 2006; Lee et al. 2009), and b) dog parks are perceived as a site of potential dog conflict and aggression, but exercise and socialization are argued to improve a dog's temperament and lead to safer conditions for

everyone (American Kennel Club 2008: 2; Gomez 2013: 85). Perspectives in the Portland debate complicate these assumptions. Although the majority of off-leash area proponents (67%) argue that dog parks are safe and healthy environments for their dogs, 71% of off-leash area opponents identified themselves as dog owners who do not take their dogs to off-leash areas due to negative experiences with diseases from stagnant water or attack from off-leash dogs. Pet owners choose not to use off-leash areas for a variety of reasons from lack of amenities or inconvenient locations to experiencing various degrees of exclusion. These pet owners are underrepresented in the literature. Although they are less accessible for surveys and interviews than dog owners in off-leash areas, their perspectives could provide insight into improving amenities and making parks more accessible and inclusive.

Responsibility and Off-Leash Activism

The accounts of off-leash politics in Portland resonate with the histories of off-leash activism expressed in the literature. The human-animal studies literature emphasizes the needs of dogs in accounts of off-leash politics; the moral obligation to provide off-leash exercise for dogs (Wolch 2002) as a justification for running pets off-leash in non-designated areas (Walsh 2011) is established in the Portland debate around themes of responsibility. However, arguments in the Portland debate address the needs of dogs from an owner perspective and incorporate their demands as tax-paying citizens. One proponent appeals, “as a dog owner, I feel a responsibility to walk or exercise my canine companion,” while others express frustration and argue that they have no choice

but to run their dogs off-leash until the city and parks department accept responsibility for providing designated off-leash areas for tax paying dog owners.

Accounts of dog owner's feelings of responsibility and entitlement to space as tax paying citizens are missing from the human-animal studies research. Humans and animals are socially and politically entangled; animals are city dwellers and their needs should be considered in decisions about public space. However, I am suspicious of arguments by pet owners who speak on behalf of their animals within the realm of politics because I am not convinced that dog parks exemplify spaces of justice for animals. Further expanding the vision of what is considered harmful and beneficial about dog parks can inform a new set of questions for evaluating what meets the needs of dogs in cities.

Iris Marion Young's (2011) distinction between personal responsibility and public responsibility is useful for evaluating notions of responsibility in the off-leash area debate. She relates personal responsibility with a sense of morality that animates the actions of individuals in ways that allow them to avoid blame or guilt (88). In contrast, public responsibility is political in nature; it involves recognizing injustices and acting in ways that contribute to collective interventions towards more just outcomes (89). The arguments of the Portland debate employ notions of responsibility in alignment with Young's notion of personal responsibility or individualist morality through framing responsibility in terms of individual behaviors leading to blame or guilt through accusations of irresponsibility. Meanwhile, the patterns of racial and economic change polarizing Portland are never mentioned.

The distribution of Portland's off-leash areas in relation to patterns of racial and economic change from 2000 to 2015 suggest the need for broader discussion and evaluation of dog parks as amenity spaces, and greater intervention into the bifurcating racialized space of the city. The limitation of tracking racial and economic change is that it misses historically affluent areas that remain affluent as well as persistently disadvantaged areas. Yet, when areas of increasing and persistent affluence are considered together, 70% of off-leash areas are located in racially and economically advantaged areas. This distribution suggests a need to investigate dog parks not only as physical amenities but also as cultural amenities which appeal to affluent cultural values and interact with changing neighborhood characteristics. The distribution of off-leash areas across Portland is not as stark as the dog park distribution found throughout Chicago (92% of dog parks in predominantly higher income white neighborhoods; see Nast 2006a); However, Portland as both the whitest city in America (Semuels 2016), and home to the second largest dog park network (Trust for Public Land 2016) suggests further research on the whiteness of dog parks and the relationship between dog parks and racialized space at the national level.

Responsibility and the Self-Governance of Off-Leash Areas

Arguments within the Portland debate express views that off-leash areas self-governed by responsible pet owners help ensure that all pet owners conduct themselves appropriately in parks. This sentiment is mirrored in the accounts of "self-policed" dog parks (Wolch & Rowe 1992; Krohe 2005; Harnik & Bridges 2006), where dog park users

assume the role of governing the behavior of other pet owners. This self-governance of off-leash areas is presented in the literature and the debate as a form of responsibility. Responsible pet owners take responsibility for their community and the maintenance of their spaces. Arguments for and against off-leash areas express faith in the ability of peer pressure and encouragement to “establish the boundaries of what ‘responsible pet ownership’ means (Instone and Mee 2011: 240),” and reshape the behaviors of irresponsible pet owners. Moreover, proponents depict off-leash areas as beneficial to the whole city because they are the spaces in which this peer education occurs.

Young’s distinction between personal and public responsibility is again useful for evaluating the responsibility of self-governance. Rather than interpreting the actions of self-governance as a public responsibility, my analysis of the Portland debate suggests that these actions are a form of personal responsibility. It took off-leash advocates over ten years to establish Portland’s dog park network, partly because dogs have proven to be a sharp point of tension among community members. Dog park self-governance is not public because it does not seek to address conditions beyond the off-leash area; rather, self-governance and maintenance of off-leash areas are personal strategies that emerge from the advocacy in establishing off-leash areas, and it serves to preserve this hard fought for socially contentious amenity. Analytically situating dog parks within the urban environment they physically occupy reminds us that dog parks also function to mitigate citizen complaints of off leash dogs. What is the future of urban dog parks if they do not serve this purpose?

Privilege and Off-Leash Politics

Urban researchers studying neighborhood change have begun to question the privilege of actors engaged in off-leash activism by highlighting the affluent white identity of dog park advocates and organizations. Heidi Nast (2006a) critiques the differential ability of white affluent dog owners with political clout to unofficially appropriate space for their dogs, and Derek Hyra (2015) studies white affluent newcomers differentially able to officially appropriate space for their dogs. While the dog-centric literature overlooks the racial and economic privilege of off-leash activism, the gentrification literature focuses on the displacement of relatively disadvantaged long-time neighborhood residents (Tissot 2011; Hyra 2015). Neither of these perspectives address the privilege of the opposition to off-leash areas. For the remainder of the chapter, I will discuss aspects of Portland's off-leash area debate that suggest the privilege of who gets represented in off-leash politics and how that relates to changing neighborhood characteristics.

An aspect of off-leash politics that is taken for granted in the literature and the Portland debate is the acceptance and official endorsement of self-governance over the space and behavior within off-leash areas. While the reach of off-leash area self-governance is limited, advisory committees that produce education and enforcement materials as well as policy recommendations are comprised of active off-leash area users. Perhaps there is nothing inherently wrong with self-governance, but there is no empirical research on how the everyday practices of off-leash area self-governance impact pet owner and park user behaviors, and how shifting behaviors influence inclusion and

exclusion based on conceptions of responsible pet ownership. Although permitting self-governance is in the interests of local governments with limited budgets for park rangers and animal control officers, histories of municipal enforcement in many cities, including Portland (Serbulo & Gibson 2013), suggest that the recognition of self-governance of public spaces and behaviors is not widely available to social groups other than affluent whites.

The relative social privilege of off-leash politics is evident in the media and literature representations of dog parks as a positive force reclaiming parks from pathologized users such as homeless people, alcoholics, and drug dealers (Wolch 2002; Krohe 2005; Harnik & Bridges 2006; Gomez 2013). Off-leash area proponents in the Portland debate raise concerns of mugging, rape, murder, alcohol, diapers, and hypodermic needles in favor of dog parks, but one statement exemplifies the sentiment: “I have seen this before: when the people and their dogs are pushed out, the drunks and transients move in, and the safe, friendly atmosphere of the park is destroyed.” In the debates and the literature, off-leash area proponents pathologize and blame dog owners as irresponsible and threatening, and proponents refocus blame for troubled parks onto disadvantaged social groups. Indifference or antagonism to the inequities of homelessness and drug addiction helps inform why no perspectives questions the benefit of displacing these pathologized park users. These perspectives employ diverse strategies within a narrow range of personal interests and “attend to one another’s claims and needs” in order to maintain their own privilege (Young 2011: 164).

Complaints of off leash dogs documented in media and planning reports and meeting notes were highly concentrated in parks in racially and economically advantaged

areas. 95% of published dog complaints were in increasingly or historically advantaged areas. There are two limitations of this analysis for making claims about the relationship between dog parks and neighborhood change, but these limitations highlight the privilege involved in representations of off-leash politics. Off-leash areas typically are sections of city parks; therefore, the distribution of off-leash areas is limited to the pre-existing distribution of city parks. In tracking complaints of dogs in city parks I had hoped to open up the geography of examining contention around dogs in public space beyond off-leash areas; however, only three of the 18 parks mentioned in the 43 complaints were non-designated off-leash areas. The pattern of complaints does not represent a general issue with dogs in public space as much as an issue with officially designating space for dogs since a vast majority of the complaints narrowly focus on parks that either were about to be, or had been, designated as official off-leash areas.

The second limitation involves the data sources; newspaper editorials and planning documents are moderated by interests that publish or record content that will tend toward privileged perspectives. This limitation opens the argument to skewed findings; that is the point! These are the perspectives that are read and inform the parameters of the public discussion on off-leash areas. These are the documents and research studies cited by local policy makers to account for siting, amenities, and funding decisions. Given the increasingly popularity of dog parks and Portland's exceptionally 'dog-friendly' reputation, policymakers and advocates will look to Portland as an example. The available research, public documentation, and perceptions of conflict and potential impacts of dog parks is limited. For instance, there is no mention by city staff, community members, journalists, or editorials of the racial insensitivity and intimidation

that Black residents of NE Portland neighborhoods expressed in the Restorative Listening Project sessions on Race and Dogs (Drew 2011). There are no documents analyzing neighborhood histories or demographic change in making off-leash area siting decisions. Certainly most conflict over dogs goes unrecorded, but broadening the categories of conflict and placing dog parks in urban space will work toward creating more equitable public space throughout the city.

Conclusion

Portland's debate over off-leash areas and dog in public space continues to occur between perspectives with conflicting notions of personal responsibility, but my analysis suggests a need to incorporate a sense of public responsibility into the research, representations, and decisions involved with off-leash politics. I do not propose that dog parks explain neighborhood change, nor am I arguing that dogs or their owners are responsible for racialized space, disparities, and displacement in Portland. Rather, I am arguing for research and public debate to consider dog parks within their changing neighborhoods.

When I look at the map of Portland's racial and economic change over the 15 year study period, I see a divided and two-tiered city. Affluent whites increased in well-connected centrally located and amenity rich areas west of 82nd Avenue while people of color and low-income residents increased in further out areas east of 82nd Avenue with less opportunities and amenities. The distribution of off-leash areas throughout this two-tiered city suggest that they are one of the many amenities that contribute to the

desirability of Portland's central neighborhoods to affluent whites. Analyzing dog parks not only as bounded physical spaces, but also as spatial categories within changing neighborhoods, allows researchers and policymakers to consider the structural injustices, the cumulative and unintended unjust consequences (powell 2007; Young 2002), of exclusion or displacement to which off-leash areas may contribute or unintentionally encourage.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

My brief exploration of off-leash areas and demographic change in Portland, Oregon suggests a need for broader inclusion of perspectives and deeper explorations of the production, maintenance, and evaluation of urban dog parks. Off-leash dogs remain a contentious topic in Portland, and concerns raised in the debate remain limited to an individualist sense of responsibility and the physical space in and around off-leash areas. My analysis reveals scant consideration of how dog parks relate to broader urban processes in a rapidly changing city with 70% of off-leash areas located in block groups that are historically or increasingly advantaged with above average median incomes and proportions of white people.

Portland is growing and changing in ways that seem to exacerbate its historic racial and economic polarization. There seems to be a disregard, both in scholarship and public debate, of the potential that dog parks are one of many amenity spaces that cater to the cultural preferences of affluent white households contributing to this polarization. I recommend that future research on dog parks focus less on the static physical space of off-leash areas, and instead approach dog parks as a spatial category and urban amenity entangled within processes of racialized space, uneven development, and urban politics. It is critical to interrogate the assumptions and limitations of what I have identified as dog-centric research and rhetoric because to infuse equity within that project would likely take a ‘more is better’ approach to equity by expanding off-leash area access to neighborhoods east of 82nd Avenue. Rather, the findings from my analysis lead me to interpret dog parks as a contemporary example within a long history of differential access to urban services informed by racialized and class-based notions of neighborhood need

and value. These inequitable conceptions remain and they continue to contribute to neighborhood change by determining where amenity investments are prioritized based on who stands to benefit. Truly equitable questions would ask how dog parks contribute to the white affluent desirability of some neighborhoods that receive resources at the expense of other neighborhoods. And how can urban planners empower all residents to determine the types of amenities and services that benefit their communities?

The City of Seattle may prove to be an interesting case study in public responsibility for dog parks. In 1995, the Seattle parks department identified three high crime parks and designated them as off-leash areas to “reclaim [them] from illegal users (Harnik & Bridges 2006).” 20 years later, the Seattle parks department issued a dog park plan with a racial equity lens to question the potential racialized outcomes of future dog park siting and funding decisions (Seattle Parks and Recreation 2016). It will be interesting to see if and how the racial equity lens opens up the discussion of dog parks in Seattle, but an examination of this process could provide useful additions to the conventional dog park best practices.

Research can further explore how dog parks intentionally and unintentionally serve as spaces of race and class exclusion in demographically changing neighborhoods. This line of inquiry into neighborhood amenity spaces has been useful in studies of community gardens as racialized food spaces (Ramirez 2015), and the neighborhood conflict, exclusion, and displacement associated with bike lanes (Stehlin 2015) and bicycle advocacy (Hoffman 2016). Lastly, I encourage revisiting Heidi Nast’s call for a critical pet studies (2006b), which includes a deeper exploration of the relationship between the elevated status of pets as symbolic family members and the changing notions

of what it means to be a responsible pet owner. As cities continue to experience population growth and neighborhood change, it becomes increasingly necessary that studies of off-leash areas take seriously the role of dog parks within the production of urban space.

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APPENDIX A: EDITORIAL ANALYSIS DATASET

The 53 editorial opinions listed below constitute the dataset that I used for the thematic analysis of the debate over off leash dogs and off-leash areas in Portland. The editorials are presented here in the format that I received them from the NewsBank search results.

RUNNING ROOM FOR DOGS

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - June 15, 1995

Section: EDITORIAL; Page: C06

Summary: Set off areas in public parks for dogs to run free without bothering other visitors

Leashes are the law, but Portland's park system is big enough to provide a few places where people can run their dogs without leashes. Parks Commissioner Charlie Hales says he may designate three or four off-leash zones to respond to dog owners who want to let their pets romp and run free. He's barking up the right tree.

More and more people are running their dogs unleashed in Portland's parks already. For some owners, it's a social as well as exercise opportunity. Their dogs romp with other dogs while the owners visit. The leash law has never been tightly enforced. There certainly are higher priorities for public attention -- street mugging, for example.

Still, dog owners should recognize that their pets create significant problems for others. Owners may not believe their happy, rambunctious pets would nip at someone's heels, scare a toddler or trip a frail person. But it happens. Just as bad, the possibility of its happening ruins the enjoyment of parks for some people.

Multnomah County requires a leash on any dog not on his owner's property. The county also requires dog owners to scoop up their dogs' waste, for health and sanitation reasons.

As complaints increased last summer, Portland parks and Multnomah County animal-control officials met with dog owners and neighborhood groups to discuss problems and possible solutions. As a result, the officials recommended: (1) increasing the public's awareness of laws for dogs in parks; (2) creating a telephone number for citizens to call, and then to track complaints and comments; (3) forming a citizens committee to stay on top of the issues; (4) reviewing penalties; and (5) developing criteria and a process for siting offleash areas.

Bingo for No. 5 -- almost. Developing criteria and a process could take months. Summer is here and the parks are inviting. Eugene fenced areas in four parks about three years ago and reports enthusiasm among dog owners and acceptance among people who don't want to be bothered by unleashed dogs.

When owners of model-sized motorized boats were racing them in the Westmoreland casting pond, Portland found another site acceptable to both the racers and the public protective of the pond. When people objected to noisy, gas-powered model airplanes

buzzing around them in the parks, Portland found places where the activity is less intrusive.

That's the tack Hales should take. As overseer of the parks, he ought to designate a few leash-free areas. Give the proposed citizens committee some experience to evaluate. Mark and publicize the areas well. Ask dog owners to help set up and administer the zones -- including policing pet waste. Make the leash-free areas work, or make the leash laws work.

OFF-LEASH DOGS ERODING PARKS

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - March 9, 2001

Section: EDITORIAL; Page: C10

I completely agree with Joe Higgins' letter to the editor ("Park Bureau is negligent," Feb. 22). I have found an identical situation to be true for Mount Tabor Park on the opposite side of town.< The old off-leash area just above the upper reservoir was closed due to pollution of the uncovered upper reservoir. However, the same area has become an illegal off-leash area and has become seriously eroded again.

There is no current enforcement of the leash laws in Mount Tabor Park. I have a small dog that I will no longer walk in the park due to charges by large off-leash dogs.

It is time that the Park Bureau takes some action to see that the leash laws are enforced in Portland parks.

FRANK GORSHE

BE MORE TOLERANT OF DOGS IN PARKS

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - June 29, 2001

Section: EDITORIAL; Page: B08

Many recent letters have criticized irresponsible people taking their dogs to public parks. One letter cited an example in which a young child placed his or her hand in dog excrement while playing in a public park (June 21). The writer suggested that dogs should be allowed in off-leash areas only if the dog owners pay for the land, maintenance and patrols.

As a taxpayer and a dog owner, I am highly offended by the intolerance exhibited by this attitude. Everyone should be responsible. This means that dogs should not be allowed to run loose.

But this also means that I should not see dirty diapers tossed in the woods by irresponsible parents when I go hiking to the top of Multnomah Falls. The recent E. coli outbreak in Battle Ground Lake was attributed to contamination from fecal material from a young child (Jan. 8 article).

While it is obvious from these examples that both parents and dog owners can be irresponsible, the lesson is not to try to ban either from using the public parks. Quite the contrary -- since we are all taxpayers, we should work to make our parks better. This does not always mean more rules.

GABRIELE OSCARSON

DOG OWNERS SHOULD BEAR COSTS

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - June 21, 2001

Section: EDITORIAL; Page: B08

Regarding "Limited off-leash areas leave dog owners growling" (June 17), should taxpayers pay for off-leash dog parks? We pay for public schools even though all citizens are not parents. Of course. Should we buy land for horse owners to exercise their animals? Of course not.

Maybe dog owners should pay a higher licensing fee to shoulder the cost of these parks. Or groups of dog owners could band together to purchase land for doggie cooperatives where members have a fee, like private athletic clubs. Surly and unhygienic members would not be welcome.

I like responsible dog owners and their well-mannered pets. Cleaning the canine mess off my toddler's shoes at Lair Hill Park and encounters with rude dog owners who refuse to leash their dogs at the playground area at Gabriel Park leave me impatient on this topic. What do dog owners in Manhattan do?

SARA GENTA ROMERO

DOG PARKS SEEM UNHEALTHY

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - June 23, 2001

Section: EDITORIAL; Page: D08

Regarding off-leash areas for dogs in parks], I really have to question the intelligence of people willing to stand in a feces/urine-covered field (muddy or dusty) and purposely expose their dogs to disease and/or attack. Wouldn't it be healthier for both dog and owner to walk or run (with leash), thus getting exercise for both?

CATHY PACE

DOGS NEED PLAYGROUNDS, TOO

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - June 29, 2001

Section: EDITORIAL; Page: B08

In response to the June 17 article regarding off-leash areas for dogs in parks, it's time to stop the prejudice against dogs and dog owners and give us a place to take our dogs.

I agree that all dog owners need to be responsible for their dogs and that many of us have taken our dogs off their leashes in unauthorized areas. Most dog owners would rather take our dogs to safe, fenced-in places to play, but such options are limited and disappearing. We would just like a legal place to bring our dogs.

Dog parks have advantages for everyone: They allow socialization so that dogs are not threatening to others, provide a place to gather around a community interest and provide exercise and fun for dogs. It is unfair that children have playgrounds and dogs do not. My tax money pays for parks for children I don't have. Given that your children are going to parks that my money helps support, I think it is only fair that this community have a place for dogs.

GINA PATRIARCA

IMAGE OF DOG PARKS FUZZY

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - June 29, 2001

Section: EDITORIAL; Page: B08

In response to Cathy Pace's letter, "Dog parks seem unhealthy" (June 23), I would like to clarify the impression she made about dog parks being covered with urine and feces.

Dog owners who go to Gabriel Park are courteous and respect a clean environment for themselves and their dogs. Plastic bags have been donated by Safeway, and trash receptacles are located within the off-leash premises.

Pace states that dog parks may increase the likelihood of dog attacks. I would argue that instead, the park offers an opportunity for dogs to be socialized with other dogs, thus decreasing the likelihood that they will attack other dogs. When dog scuffles do occur at the park, owners dutifully leave the park with their dogs. Thanks to Gabriel Park, my dog has learned how to interact with other dogs and is much friendlier with people, too.

LAURA CLEMENTSON

PARKS BUREAU IS NEGLIGENT

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - February 22, 2001

Section: EDITORIAL; Page: B10

Last fall the off-leash area in Gabriel Park was closed because runoff from the site was polluting Vermont Creek, and the site was becoming denuded as the result of too many dog paws tearing it up. So what happened as the result of this protective action?

The dog owners just moved to the east of the off-leash area and claimed this open area as their own. The Parks Bureau facilitated this move by placing a bench and poop bag dispenser there. As a result:

1. Between 10 and 25 off-leash dogs can be found free running in the appropriated park area during mid-day hours on any nice day.
2. The appropriated area is now as badly torn up as the official off-leash area was when it was closed.
3. Vermont Creek continues to be polluted, only more so because the appropriated area is farther up the creek. Pedestrians and legal dog owners are intimidated and sometimes harmed by the large numbers of free-running dogs racing across the main east-west trail through the park. Why isn't the Parks Bureau doing something about this situation?

JOSEPH F. HIGGINS

LEASH LAWS NEED ENFORCEMENT

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - January 9, 2002

Section: EDITORIAL; Page: D08

Your photo of four dogs running free on the Eastside Esplanade (Jan. 3) unwittingly highlights an increasing problem in Portland's parks and on our sidewalks as well.

Dogs are not permitted off-leash on any sidewalk nor in any park, except in designated off-leash areas. Yet, there is so little enforcement by either the Portland Parks department or by Multnomah Animal Control, that owners Irene and Ted Parsons may not have known they were violating the law.

To many people, these small dogs may seem harmless. Indeed, to some, even large dogs seem harmless. However, to children, the elderly and many other people, a loose dog gives rise to fear. There have been increasing instances of dog attacks in the Portland area. How many people decide to drive instead of walk out of fear of loose dogs? If the Portland region truly wants to encourage people of all ages to walk for transportation and

for recreation, the cities and counties must increase enforcement of the leash laws, so everyone can feel safe walking down the sidewalk.

DOUGLAS KLOTZ

WORK ON REASONABLE SOLUTIONS

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - July 12, 2002

Section: EDITORIAL; Page: C06

The July 10 letters section demonstrated plenty of conflict between Portland's dog owners and other park users. Let's be constructive by agreeing on the following:

1. Dogs shouldn't run off leash in the parks; their owners should pick up after them.
2. Dog owners are citizens, too, and should have a place to let their dogs run around and play.
3. Adequate off-leash areas reduce the potential for conflict. Dogs will poop somewhere. Better in a dog park equipped with bags and garbage bins than elsewhere.

Portland's off-leash areas are few and far apart. Half the year, Gabriel Park is closed or unusable due to mud and darkness. Other cities do better than Portland -- Eugene has three large off-leash areas year 'round despite being a fraction of our size.

We can solve this conflict by maintaining more fenced off-leash areas year-round and enforcing laws.

JONATHAN HOFFMAN

MAKE IT SAFE FOR PEOPLE, DOGS

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - July 12, 2002

Section: EDITORIAL; Page: C06

I was very pleased with Rene Denfeld's article regarding the problem of off-leash dogs in Portland parks ("Park pariahs," July 7). I, like Denfeld, am a dog lover and dog owner. I live a few blocks from Mount Tabor Park and walk my West Highland White Terrier there anywhere from one to several times per week. She is always on a leash, unlike the majority of other dogs.

Three times before she was 1 year old, she was attacked by large, off-leash dogs. Owners who let their dogs run off leash act as though the right to do so is written in the Constitution. It is time for the city to uphold the law and make our parks a safe environment for people and dogs.

GERARD LILLIE

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR CRACK DOWN WITH BIG FINES

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - July 10, 2002

Section: EDITORIAL; Page: C08

How can I thank Rene Denfeld ("Park pariahs," July 7) enough for saying out loud and in public how so many of us feel about off-leash dog parks? I long ago stopped taking my children to Gabriel Park because the problem was so bad with people letting their dogs run loose, scaring my children, even before there was such a thing as an off-leash area.

I even filed a complaint against a man who constantly let his dog run loose in our neighborhood. We appeared in "doggie court," and when I presented a photo of his dog running loose, he admitted his offense. The judge, a dog owner himself, reduced the fine by half.

We must follow through with severe charges against such dog owners]. The pocketbook is the only way that these people will get the message.

DEBORAH BUSH

Dog owners ruining parks. As someone who lives a few doors down from a local park (Irving Park), I can attest to the problem of people disobeying leash laws and common courtesy. I have a 2-year-old who has been knocked over several times by unleashed, unsupervised dogs in the park. My family bought our home because of its closeness to the park, but has found that the "dog people" have made living near the park a negative. The fact that there is no recourse through the parks department or Animal Control is horrible. Portland is known for its parks, and it is a shame that individuals who cannot obey the law are ruining them. I ask dog owners to consider that small children play in the yards and playgrounds they allow their animals to defecate in.

AMY DAISY

Parks are for people Bravo to Rene Denfeld for putting into words what many of us feel about the growing problem of off-leash dogs in our parks.

My family and I have watched in alarm as the number of free-running dogs has increased drastically in Portland parks over the last 10 years. Some of our favorite parks, such as Mount Tabor and Laurelhurst, have become, in effect, large public dog kennels.

I am with Denfeld -- enough is enough! Parks are for people -- especially small people like kids.

WILLIAM SCHNEIDER

Park dogs behave well I walk in Gabriel Park almost daily, and my experience has been very different from that of Rene Denfeld. My kids and I are never bothered by dogs. By and large, the dogs -- off leash or on -- just ignore us. They don't bark, growl or even approach us, even when we want to pet them.

I rarely see dog messes on the ground; on the contrary, most dog owners have their plastic bags ready before the dogs are even finished "doing their business."

The only time I see the pack behavior described by Denfeld is in the official off-leash area -- where it belongs. Occasionally a couple of dogs will roughhouse on the grass, but by and large the dogs walk politely alongside their owners, are under voice control and don't menace anyone.

In theory, I agree that dogs should be on a leash in a public park, but in practice I find Gabriel Park's dogs to be completely innocuous.

KATHRYN A. PEARSON

Create open society for dogs Rene Denfeld was inventing hysterical nonsense when she described her visits to the parks in Portland.

I go to several parks within walking distance of my apartment every day with my two dogs. I have never witnessed what she described. Instead, I see humans and dogs coexisting and having fun. I think that instead of the repressive regime she advocates, a better plan would be to model ourselves after the French and have dogs invited everywhere, including cafes and buses and most of all the parks. We could even have those great machines for sucking up poop that the French have. It would be wonderful to have cleaner streets in general since most of the litter is left by humans, not dogs.

NATALIE LEAVENWORTH

Set citywide off-leash hours Rene Denfeld repeats the hyperbole without proof of the zealots opposed to off-leash dogs. I live across from Laurelhurst Park. I'm in the park

every day and I've never seen a dog chase a duck. As for poop, I play catch with my 10-year old son regularly and we rarely see dog poop. Putting dogs on leashes wouldn't solve that problem anyway. On or off leash, dog poop should be removed. Most dog owners who use Laurelhurst Park meet that responsibility.

Off-leash areas don't solve the problem. They are dirty and you must drive, creating greenhouse gases. That's why we need off-leash hours in all parks. The impact is minimized by spreading it around.

SCOTT PRATT

Show respect for leash law. The example of adults flouting the law in front of their small children is of great concern. The clear lesson is to obey the law only when it's convenient. In today's world, that is not a lesson that needs reinforcement; rather, it is a sad commentary on disrespect for others.

As I dog owner, I feel a responsibility to walk or exercise my canine companion daily.

Voice control of a dog is difficult at best -- mostly impossible with temptations such as birds, cats, other dogs, squirrels and small children with food. They are all easy prey. So even the strictest owner of an off-leash dog has little to say in certain situations, for dogs will be dogs.

Until the city and county can afford supervised off-leash areas in designated locations with adequate facilities such as fencing and water fountains at dog level, there is no alternative to having law-abiding citizens respect the leash law and accept responsibility for their dogs.

CAROLE von SCHMIDT

Wanted: leash law breakers. If the county and the city will not enforce the law, maybe we can shame people into keeping their pets on a leash. How about a Web site where we can post pictures of people with their off-leash dogs?

The county has already agreed to fine offenders if they can be identified. I will volunteer to maintain the site and pay the domain registration fee.

FRANK KEANE

Three areas insufficient Rene Denfeld's snarling, biting diatribe inadvertently reveals the obvious: Eighty-thousand-plus dogs cannot possibly use three small, fenced-in off-leash areas.

Furthermore, if all 80,000-plus dogs were driven to Gabriel, Chimney and Delta parks before and after work hours, Interstate 5 would be permanently jammed and air pollution would increase.

Therefore, dogs that need more exercise than an owner can provide by walking must use neighborhood parks. If Portland really doesn't want dogs off leash in parks, it needs to provide an adequate number of off-leash areas within a reasonable distance of most neighborhoods. The author omits mention of cities that have done this successfully, including Seattle and Eugene.

RUTH GUNDLE

Dogs lend sense of safety I'd much rather be in the parks with people walking their dogs, exercising, socializing and being healthy, than be there alone and constantly worrying about being exposed to, raped, mugged or murdered. In winter, without dog walkers, these places would be empty.

In places where dogs aren't allowed, I just don't go, as it doesn't feel safe, and that doesn't seem fair to me. Why should I have to get an escort to go to my tax-supported public park?

There are plenty of people who just don't like dogs, and often they hide that feeling in their complaining about the few dog owners who need to learn more manners. Most owners do use leashes. Most owners do pick up dog poop.

SUSAN LINDSAY

No more support for park taxes. My experiences with dogs in Gabriel Park over the past two years have led me to vote against any taxes for parks in Portland. Let the dog owners who have laid claim to those areas pay for the upkeep. They are the ones who are destroying the parks; they should be billed for the mess they create.

MICHAEL MASE

ANIMALS MAKE THE NEWS EXPECT ATTACKS, MORE PROBLEMS

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - July 23, 2003

Section: EDITORIAL; Page: C06

Expect attacks, more problems. I fail to understand how giving the city parks to the dogs will alleviate the park/dog problems in Portland. If you have ever been confronted by a large, unrestrained pit bull with an unknown disposition, then you know that leash laws make sense. I predict that by giving [parts of] the city parks up to roving carnivores, there will be more serious problems. There will be dog attacks on adults and children. It will not be safe to send your kids to the park.

This idea that a dog needs to run free is only in the minds of the owners.

I would like to see the American bison run free over the Midwest plains. I want the cougars and the bears to run free in Oregon. How about the wolves? They should run free, too. I would love to see all the animals run free, but in a civilized world, I know that this is not practical.

DOUG HYLTON

Every park is a dog park. I was appalled when I read Alesia J. Reese's opinion piece, "City inaction has brought dog deaths" (July 18). Could blame for the Laurelhurst Park poisonings be any more misplaced?

Reese whines about the apparent lack of dog parks in this city. It seems to me that every park in this city is a dog park. The two parks in my neighborhood -- Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn School Park -- often have dogs in them, and those dogs are often off leash.

Last Tuesday, I biked through Sellwood Park. Every dog I saw was off leash. On Thursday, I biked through Mount Tabor Park. Every dog I saw was off leash.

What Reese and her fellow dogs' rights advocates fail to realize is that non-dog owners like to enjoy the city's parks, too. Unleashed dogs ruin landscaping, leave their droppings in the grass and sometimes fight one another. Non-dog owners don't appreciate being accosted by strange dogs.

In short, the selfishness of dog owners makes the parks less enjoyable for people who don't own dogs. The poisonings in Laurelhurst Park were awful, criminal acts, but there is such a thing as a leash law. Obey it.

ROBERT MOORE

And then, the horses. As a taxpayer and horse owner, I wish to ride my two horses in a public park. I realize that this is unlawful, but horses are herd animals, and it is important for their well-being to exercise and socialize with other horses in a natural setting.

Many of my fellow horse owners agree that our horses' health and our own pleasure would be enhanced by riding in public parks. I intend to ensure that my horses do not disrupt others' enjoyment of the park. For their own safety, pedestrians, bikers, skateboarders and dogs will need to stay out of my horses' way.

Because most parks do not provide adequate parking space for my needs, I may park my pickup and trailer nearby in the neighborhood. I will make every effort to respect private property, although while I'm loading or unloading, my horses may nibble landscaping or wander into the street.

Homeowners, pedestrians and drivers will just have to be tolerant and patient!

The city should start equipping the parks with large plastic bags and appropriate receptacles for horses' manure, as well as water troughs.

Again, I realize that I will be breaking the law, but as I and other horse enthusiasts come out in force to demand our share of our tax-supported parks, I expect the city will eventually amend the law to accommodate our choices.

LORE CARLSON

One, two, three; problem solved Wrong-Way Portland made the news again, as the story of the dog poisonings has now gone national. I find it hard to understand why this problem hasn't been solved. Here's my three-step solution:

1. Increase pet license fees enough to make the system self-supporting.
2. Set aside a section of all parks for licensed dogs and fence it in. Any dog may be off leash in that area, but only in that area. The increased fees would pay for maintaining dog areas.
3. Declare all other unleashed and/or unlicensed animals in public places to be a nuisance and abate the nuisance with vigorous enforcement and large, mandatory fines.

Solution applied, problem solved. Now to find the leaders with the guts to enact the changes and enforce them.

GEORGE SCHNEIDER

Put dogs to good use - As a solution to the problems of dogs in parks, I suggest that the 40 million dogs in America be made into dogburgers. That would provide enough meat to alleviate the gnawing pain of hunger among those who have no food on the table and no money to buy it. The \$5 billion spent on worthless dogs and cats annually would serve a humane purpose.

Dogs and cats are not people, so they can't take the place of people. They are incapable of love and affection. To these animals, their owners are simply other animals that provide food and shelter.

DAVE SAUNDERS

'Pets are a luxury' I first want to express my appreciation to the many Portlanders who understand the responsibilities of having a dog. These are the people considerate enough to leash their pets when they go on walks. These good citizens know it's not just illegal but also rude to let their dogs bark relentlessly, and they understand that, though unsavory, it's a law to pick up after their publicly pooping pets.

As for other dog owners, particularly those who wrote last week blaming Portland Parks and Recreation for their own selfishness and laziness, I say, "Get over yourselves."

Pets are a luxury. If your dog "needs" to roam free, buy a house with a back yard. Too expensive, you say? Then you and your precious should take regular drives to the off-leash areas that are already provided at taxpayer expense.

Too pressed for time? Perhaps you should have adopted a cat instead.

RICK PIET

Dog owners 'asked for trouble.' I am an animal lover with three dogs, three cats and a cockatiel. I also have a neighbor who is very troubled by my dogs. However, while I in no way intend to justify the poisonings of dogs at Laurelhurst Park, I do believe that the pet owners have asked for trouble by defying the leash laws. Without question, the dog debris left in city parks diminishes everyone's enjoyment. You have a psychopath in Portland who will act irrationally to make his/her point. Irresponsible pet ownership is what precipitated this wacko's actions. Responsible ownership may have prevented the same.

BERNARD BLUMFIELD

DOG ADVOCATES, FOES CAN COEXIST

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - August 2, 2003

Section: EDITORIAL; Page: C05

I applaud Portland Parks and Recreation's plan to provide safe, protected off-leash hours and times, coupled with greater enforcement of leash laws ("City proposes more dog off-leash areas," July 22).

Several days ago, this paper ran several letters from writers who disparaged dogs and dog owners. Theirs is a bitter attitude. Whatever they think of other people's choice to include dogs as part of their families, as a matter of practicality it's worth getting used to it, because a large majority of Portland residents are dog owners.

Still, that's no excuse for some dog owners to let their beloveds run free, disregarding their imposition on the space of others. Coupling enforcement of leash laws with conveniently located off-leash parks and hours can create a system in which both groups can get their needs met in our shared public spaces -- more safely and with less spite and blame.

EVE VOGEL

SHARING THE PARKS

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - August 11, 2003

Section: EDITORIAL; Page: D08

New proposal creating more off-leash areas for dogs in Portland parks is an appropriate trial program. The poisoning deaths of 11 dogs in Laurelhurst Park last month horrified dog owners, tainted Portland's famous livability and cast a dark cloud over the city's sunny season.

The attention generated by the cruel attacks also raised temperatures in the long-simmering feud between dog owners and other park users. It added urgency to finding a solution that would fairly share the city's open spaces. The Bureau of Parks and Recreation has announced a one-year trial to create two dozen off-leash areas in the parks during restricted morning and evening hours. It also plans to add permanently fenced off-leash sites to three more parks.

The City Council should endorse this proposal when it meets Wednesday. It is a reasonable solution to a vexing problem.

Portland is home to 140,000 dogs. The paltry handful of existing off-leash areas has long frustrated dog owners, leading many to ignore the city's leash laws. It's a shame that it took a despicable act to motivate action on this issue. The vile character who set out poison-laced meat should have to keep looking over his shoulder for a very long time. The police are intent on pursuing this criminal act. Once found, the perpetrator deserves to be prosecuted fully. Sadly, the resolution won't do anything for those unhappy pet owners who had to see their companion animals destroyed.

Portlanders have worked hard to create and preserve its parks. The City Council can see that they are made safe and available to be enjoyed by all -- whether on two legs or four.

OFF-LEASH PLAN DISMAYING

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - August 11, 2003

Section: EDITORIAL; Page: D09

Perhaps I am in the small minority, but if the off-leash plan before our City Council is approved ("Portland offers off-leash plan," Aug. 7), there will be 26 public parks where I will not feel welcome for eight hours out of each day. I own a small dog and frequently walk him in neighborhood parks on a leash. I don't want to be confronted by dog strangers running loose and so will have to avoid the large number of off-leash parks during prime dog-walking times. Am I alone in my dismay with this proposal?

ERIN CASON

FENCE ALL OFF-LEASH AREAS

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - August 11, 2003

Section: EDITORIAL; Page: D09

I'm glad that the city has come up with a proposal to address the issue of off-leash dogs in city parks ("Portland offers off-leash plan," Aug. 7). I endorse the proposed fenced off-leash areas in six parks. Dogs contained on leashes or behind fences are part of a civilized society. However, the proposal to allow off-leash dogs in unfenced areas of 26 parks from 5 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 8 p.m. to midnight is ill considered.

Portland has a reputation for being pedestrian-friendly. Many people walk to work, to school or to the bus stop. Often these routes cross city parks. These travels take place in the hours when the parks will be filled with unrestrained dogs. How many people will decide to go out of their way to avoid these conditions?

Several of the mentioned parks are adjacent to elementary schools. If the "part-time" off-leash areas were fenced, problems between dogs and pedestrians] would not occur.

DOUG KLOTZ

PEOPLE BEFORE PETS, PLEASE

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - August 20, 2003

Section: EDITORIAL; Page: C08

I have never in my life been more compelled to write to a newspaper until I read the Aug. 14 article ("Portland OKs trial run for more offleash parks"). The article says, "Some decried the plan as treating dogs as second-class citizens." Dogs are not second-class citizens, they are not citizens at all!

Children are our future, not dogs. Will dogs run the country, the military, businesses, schools, be moms and dads, etc.? I agree with Portland City Commissioner Jim Francesconi, "We need to accommodate dogs in our parks, but the safety of kids comes first." If dog owners really think their dogs deserve better than people, maybe they should move to the country and live on a farm where their dogs can run free in their own fenced-in yards all day long.

Didn't Portland win a national award for "Best place to raise a family"? Now, what's going to be our slogan: "Oregon: Best place to be a dog, where their rights come first."

ELLEN KAEDING

OFF-LEASH PLANS ALREADY IN WORKS

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - August 25, 2003

Section: EDITORIAL; Page: D07

The recent poisonings of dogs in Laurelhurst Park affected us all as a community. These criminal acts continue to be investigated by the Portland Police Bureau. However, the poisonings did not influence or accelerate the city's process of developing a comprehensive off-leash plan for dogs, as you suggested in an Aug. 11 editorial.

On June 18, several weeks before the Laurelhurst Park dog poisonings, the City Council approved an agreement with Multnomah County to provide increased enforcement of the leash and scoop laws in our parks. The council further directed Portland Parks and Recreation to return by Sept. 1 with a comprehensive plan to increase off-leash options for dog owners.

That proposal was presented to the council and approved unanimously on Aug. 13. It provides for three new dedicated off-leash areas and off-leash hours at 26 parks throughout Portland.

The work leading up to our current off-leash program has been going on for several years. This work was accomplished through thoughtful collaboration of concerned citizens, neighborhood coalitions, dog owners and park professionals. There is no connection between the poisonings and the development of our off-leash program.

ZARI SANTNER: Director, Portland Parks and Recreation

SET DAILY OFF-LEASH HOURS

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - June 28, 2003

Section: EDITORIAL; Page: D07

Most dog owners walk their dogs before work and after work. So, the solution to the dog off-leash issue is for Portland Parks & Recreation to allow dogs off the leash before 8 a.m. and after 6 p.m. It would be a courtesy to dog owners, but owners could still be ticketed if the dog harassed or was a danger to others using the park. Also, if you were caught with your dog off the leash between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., you would be ticketed.

KEVIN McCLONE

HERE'S AN OFF-LEASH AREA: YOUR YARD

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - July 5, 2003

Section: EDITORIAL; Page: D04

Aren't fenced yards for children and/or pets?

Yards provide a wonderful off-leash area for one's dog. And the owner should be spending time playing with and exercising her dog each day in the yard. That is part of the responsibility of having a dog. One shouldn't get a dog that needs to play and exercise outside unless one has a fenced yard. These conditions make a dog healthy, well socialized and good tempered. If the dog needs another dog to play with, invite a friend over with his dog.

Parks are for people or leashed dogs. Dogs that aren't on leashes bite and attack other people. Any time a dog leaves the owner's property line, the dog should be on a leash. It is the law. It is a safety issue. And it is being courteous of your neighbors by not leaving messes in their yards.

SUE CONACHAN

DOGS OFF LEASH BLAME PARKS AND REC INACTION

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - July 20, 2003

Section: COMMENTARY FORUM; Page: E05

Blame Parks and Rec inaction - Portland Parks and Recreation is to blame for the spate of dog poisonings at Laurelhurst Park, either because a dog-leash zealot has grown tired of its inaction and taken matters into his own hands or because some dogs were off leash and vulnerable because they were not provided designated park space in which to run. Your July 17 editorial says that the city of Portland is "taking thoughtful steps" to address the off-leash problem, but how long must it take before those steps lead somewhere? I attended meetings called by City Commissioner Jim Francesconi three years ago. Other cities long ago found satisfactory solutions.

JUDITH BARRINGTON

Schoolyards as dog parks: With the recent happenings at Laurelhurst Park, it's becoming increasingly clear that there is a need for Portland Parks and Recreation to step up to the plate and do something about the increasing tensions between dog owners and non-dog owners. These tensions have reached critical levels, enough so that dogs are being killed. Folks who access Laurelhurst and other parks are there for the enjoyment of play with their dogs, their families and friends. Dog owners and non-dog owners alike should not have to fear for the safety of their pets or themselves, their families or friends.

We need additional dog parks in this city. In addition to more dog parks, I suggest that the city designate certain school grounds as offleash dog areas before and after school. I am a dog owner and taxpayer and have no children, so shouldn't I and other dog owners have access to the schools that we also fund?

STACY L. THEDFORD

Policy prompts dog poisonings - I don't think it's too far-fetched to hold former Portland Parks and Recreation Director Charles Jordan and City Commissioner Jim Francesconi responsible, if not for the sick soul who apparently poisoned off-leash dogs in Laurelhurst Park, then at least for the deplorable state of affairs in Portland that has given rise to the tragedy of innocent dogs murdered.

They have inexcusably dithered for years, doing nothing to provide (sufficient) off-leash areas or off-leash hours while tensions steadily increased. The only solution is to provide an adequate number of off-leash areas or adequate off-leash hours within a reasonable distance of most neighborhoods.

RUTH GUNDLE

'Wanton act of hatred' Our two-year-old papillon, Terry, died as a result of the wanton act of hatred at Laurelhurst Park over the Fourth of July weekend. He was a daily visitor to the park and he loved it and the friends, both human and canine, that he made there. The tragic irony about this is that he would have loved his killer --he was that kind of dog. In this world of wars, sectarianism, terrorism and hatred, we can take a lesson from our canine friends: Love and acceptance win out every time.

ALICE VETTER

Parks unhealthy for dogs - I am a dog owner who used to take her dogs to the park. I no longer do, and the dogs are much healthier. The puddles at Grant Park are fetid and full of disease. I lost one dog to intestinal problems and saved one from getting sicker.

The problem in the parks is not just dogs. There are fast-food containers with half-eaten, rotting food; broken liquor and beer bottles; dirty diapers, cigarette butts, prophylactics and used hypodermic needles.

This is not to mention the graffiti on walls and benches. These are all conditions left by people and their children. So let's not gripe about dogs and their owners. Bicycles and their riders are hazardous and impose on my "parks experience." We dog owners are taxpayers also. Many of us do not have children but have the close pet-owner bond. We have a right for some space in the parks for exercise and socialization.

MARGIE THOMAS

Dogs, kids need to run - Imagine the day we all have to have our children tethered to their parents by way of long, adjustable cord leashes for fear of upsetting the childless adults; or worse, that of a child finding poisoned candy on the floor. This is how dog owners feel walking through Portland parks today.

Our dogs need to run free at some time during the day to expel energy, in much the same way children need to have their free time playing in close proximity to their parents. Am I comparing dogs with children? Yes; they both need supervision and control. They both hate being confined to one space for too long and love to interact with their play friends.

I allow my dog off leash in the parks, but whenever there is a potential for concern (young children, skateboarders, picnic parties, for example) the leash goes back on. Leash laws need to reflect sensibility, not mandatory rules. The deaths of the dogs possibly caused by poisoned food left in Laurelhurst Park is a tragedy. The person who did this needs to be caught. We need to keep Portland a dog-friendly city. More relaxed leash laws or more designated off-leash park zones, please.

PAUL EVANS

LEARN TO SHARE PARKS

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - June 4, 2004

Section: EDITORIAL; Page: B08

Memo to non-dog owners: To make parks successful in our community, it will take all of the citizens to become involved. The off-leash plan not only requires dog owners to take responsibility, but also non-dog-owning park users.

You will need to learn about dog behavior (to quell your fear and ignorance of dogs) and to learn why dog parks are a vital part of this community. Obviously, the meaning of sharing has been lost on people who don't have dogs. Sharing is not discriminating against a certain population, forcing them to exercise and socialize their dogs in the dark when they should be sleeping. It is certainly not putting all responsibility on one group

when this is supposed to be a community. Non-dog owners need to learn that they do not have priority for park use. We all do, and they are the ones who need to learn something now.

GINA PATRIARCA

DOG OWNERS SEEK PARITY IN PARKS

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - June 5, 2004

Section: EDITORIAL; Page: D06

As members of C-SPOT (Citizens for Safe Parks with Off-Leash Territory), a nonprofit advocacy group dedicated to developing and maintaining off-leash recreation in our parks, we must address your editorial, "Dog owners must learn new tricks" (May 23). As the group that uses parks almost four times as much as any other user group (dogs aren't seasonal or canceled on account of rain) and with more than 40 percent of the households in Portland having dogs, we think this is an issue of parity.

We do not want to infringe on any other users but we have our own fears: rabid anti-dog people who threaten us or our pets, speeding bicyclists, drug and alcohol abusers in the parks and dog poisoners.

This is why we seek special hours or fenced areas away from other activities.

As for the usage fee you suggest, we would accept this if the money went specifically to upkeep of the off-leash areas and if it were assessed on all users: kids using playgrounds, tennis courts, and so on.

Dog owners do need to step up and volunteer to keep up their local off-leash areas and license and train their dogs, but we do not need to be treated as bad children in need of re-education.

MARYCHRIS MASS: President, C-SPOT

PARKS SAFER WITH DOGS, OWNERS

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - June 14, 2004

Section: EDITORIAL; Page: B06

I have been enjoying Mount Tabor Park for the past 25 years. I have been a dog owner, and found the camaraderie of people and dogs to be delightful. The area where most dog owners congregated is ideal for off-leash activity, and was for a time designated as a legal offleash area. Then the fur started flying on the off-leash issue, and now we have strict enforcement of rules that severely curtail the ability of people or dogs to enjoy the park.

The other day I rode my bicycle to the park during the late afternoon on a beautiful, sunny day. At any time in the past 25 years, there would have been lots of people and dogs frolicking in the park, socializing, enjoying life. But on this day, there was only the security guard, the animal-control cops and a couple of apparently transient individuals with their belongings. The people who complained loud and long about off-leash dogs prevailed and now are nowhere to be seen in this deserted area of the park.

I have seen this before: When the people and their dogs are pushed out, the drunks and transients move in, and the safe, friendly atmosphere of the park is destroyed. It is a sad day for the park.

TOM O'CONNOR

ON LEASH, UNDER CONTROL AND HAPPY

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - June 14, 2004

Section: EDITORIAL; Page: B06

I read that Emily Frank's core quality of life is affected by not being able to walk her dog off leash ("Dog owners will protest off-leash pilot program," June 4). I leaned down to Bear, my middle-aged Keeshond, and asked him how his quality of life is. He is never off lead. He is never out of my control. He never gets to run up to strange people or children and scare them. He loves his walks on his flexible, long leash. He gets to play off lead, but only in fenced, private areas where no one else's quality of life is affected, and he is safe from harm. I don't do this because he is out of control or aggressive. In fact, he is the most affectionate dog I have ever had, and he is so socialized he can go to doggy day care. I do this because I love him and I want him to be a responsible community member. Bear wasn't able to answer my question, but he has such great quality of life that all of my friends want to be reincarnated as my dog.

SUZANNE BROOKS

SORRY, THIS IS NOT A DOG-OCRACY

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - August 29, 2004

Section: EDITORIAL; Page: F04

Summary: Dog owners need to promote a voluntary code of courteous conduct to advance the experiment in the parks - To hear some dog owners tell it, their animals have an inalienable right to run free in city parks. This is nonsense, of course. But Portland's year-old experiment with off-leash areas in city parks, far from satisfying dog owners, has left many feeling angry and deprived. Yes, worse than before.

They preferred the city's informal dog-ocracy that prevailed in Portland parks before the off-leash experiment began. For years, many dog owners apparently let their dogs run free whenever and wherever they wanted to in the parks, without fear that leash laws would be enforced.

Today, Portland has 33 parks where dogs can run free, but only under certain restrictions. If you break the rules, and get caught, you can now get a ticket. Owners who thrived under the old regime feel disenfranchised. They're furious, and some are not doing everything they could to make the dogs-in-the-parks experiment a success. That's unfortunate, but there's still time for them to get with the program. Around the country, wherever there are successful dog parks you'll find a devoted core of dog-lovers who made it that way. They have not succeeded by writing manifestoes imputing to dogs inalienable rights to romp and roam.

They have done it by embracing voluntary codes of courteous conduct for dogs and dog-owners, and using peer pressure to change bad behavior, human and canine. They have done it by raising money for dog amenities. They have done it by empathizing with humans who are responsible for small children, and humans who are frail, elderly or simply afraid of being knocked down by dogs. They have done it by empathizing with small-dog owners, too, who often have their own fears and concerns about big dogs.

Portland's Bureau of Parks & Recreation needs to keep boning up on these success stories. They are out there -- in fact, they are all over the country -- and the bureau needs to be able to explain what made them work.

Simplicity is part of it. Separation is part of it. In Eugene, for instance, where there are four off-leash areas, double-gated entryways to prevent dogs from bounding out and running at people are becoming standard equipment. And the dog areas all have simple hours: They're open from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m., just like the parks. In Portland, the experiment still is running, so to speak, and it could be several months before the city finishes collecting data. Still, it's clear that the system needs to be drastically simplified. It looks as though Portland was overly generous and ambitious in setting aside such a variety of off-leash areas. Sorry, folks, every dog owner can't be within a dog-walk of a dog park. The ideal would be a few destination dog parks that are large, with space for both small and large dogs, and open most of the time.

Although the Metro regional government doesn't allow dogs in its regional parks -- and dogs are notoriously hard on wildlife -- it wouldn't be unreasonable to at least consider the suitability of some of the greenspaces Metro has acquired during the past few years. Some might work for dogs.

Nothing will work without enforcement, however. Nothing will work without the strong cooperation and dedication of dog owners intent on the pursuit of happiness, not only for their dogs, but also for everyone else.

DOGS NOT ENTITLED TO RIGHTS

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - August 31, 2004

Section: EDITORIAL; Page: B08

It was refreshing to read your reasoned editorial, "Sorry, this is not a dog -ocracy" (Aug. 29). I understand that many people consider their pets to be part of their families, but a pet is still an animal and therefore not entitled to the rights of a human being.

However, our fair city, in its efforts to appease dog owners, has seen fit to make room in the public parks for the four-legged among us to run free. While I respect that decision, as a taxpayer, I don't agree with it.

Since Portland's "experiment" to allow off-leash areas was instigated, I have resolved to avoid the public parks to avoid being there at the wrong time, accosted by a large, overzealous animal belonging to someone who thinks her dog could never hurt anyone. Apparently, the bigger the dog, the bigger the dog owner's ego.

PAULINE DUGAS TAIT

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR - TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2004

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - November 23, 2004

Section: EDITORIAL; Page: C06

Dog owners pay plenty. A recent article ("Public's turn to comment on dog areas," Nov. 17) says that dog owners don't pay fees. I'm a dog owner. Last year, I paid more than \$2,200 in property taxes to Multnomah County. I paid hundreds of dollars in income tax to the county. I paid for a county dog license. I paid entrance fees for Willamette Park. I paid the state to register my car and also paid for a license to drive the car. I paid state income taxes. I paid federal income taxes. I paid Social Security and Medicare. I paid federal and local excise taxes on my phone, gas and electricity bills. I paid for a national forest parking permit. I paid state park fees.

We all pay for government services we don't use. I don't have children but I help pay for public schools. It's time I got a fair shake. Use some of my property taxes, my local

income taxes, my dog license fees, my park entrance fees -- whatever it takes -- to help pay for offleash dog areas. Just don't charge me another fee or tax. My income can't handle it.

PETE SPRINGER

DOG OWNERS MUST LEARN NEW TRICKS

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - May 23, 2004

Section: EDITORIAL; Page: F04

Summary: The success of Portland's experiment with dogs in parks largely depends on obedience training for their masters - The rules about keeping dogs leashed in Portland parks were so widely violated in the past that the city tried an experiment: It started a yearlong pilot project to let dogs run free in more parks. But now some dog owners are howling.

They preferred breaking the rules with impunity. Before, they let their dogs off the leash whenever they liked in any park, with almost no fear of enforcement. Now there's a slim chance they might be interrupted, warned if they break the rules or even ticketed, and they don't like it. Tough.

Some kind of enforcement has to go along with this new freedom to let dogs romp in parks or the freedom will disappear. Even as some dog owners are complaining that the new rules are too restrictive, we're hearing anecdotes from other Portlanders who are avoiding parks because they feel intimidated by loose dogs.

That's unfair and wrong. The idea behind this experiment is to do a better job of sharing the parks with dogs, not to turn parks over to dogs. Anecdotes are not enough, of course, and the Portland Parks Bureau understands that. The bureau is monitoring parks, gathering calls and comments and will soon begin surveying city residents to understand exactly how the dog experiment is working. We won't know for sure until the bureau reports to the Portland City Council next fall.

What we do know is that this experiment won't be a success unless dog owners take responsibility for making it a success. Dog owners need to volunteer to do park-monitoring and help their fellow dog owners abide by the rules. Peer pressure is probably the most powerful way to change behavior. The city has roughly 50 of these dog-deputies already, but volunteer coordinator Cheryl Fairfax (503-823-2332) is looking for more. The city is also looking at strategies to make the dog program self-sustaining, which it needs to be. Asking dog owners to pay \$25 a year for a park pass is one possibility.

We can offer one preliminary assessment: The rules governing off-leash areas are far too confusing. Nevertheless, dog owners need to take the time to understand the rules. Owners who let their dogs go where they're not supposed to go can be subject to a \$150 ticket. "We knew that if it wasn't an 'ouch,' it wouldn't be that big of a deal," says the bureau's Darlene Carlson. Tickets shouldn't be given to first-time offenders, but they do need to be available to crack down on diehards. About 385 tickets were handed out between December and May, which doesn't seem excessive, in view of the fact that dogs now have times they can run in 33 parks. City officials concede that, if anything, enforcement has been woefully inadequate.

We'd love to see Portland's experiment with dogs in the parks go well, but that will happen only if dog owners learn new tricks. It's up to the owners to volunteer, change

their behavior, help re-educate each other and make the experiment a runaway success, so to speak. Memo to dog-owners: No more growling.

DOG OWNERS DOING THEIR PART

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - May 29, 2004

Section: EDITORIAL; Page: B04

Your editorial about Portland Parks and Recreation's off-leash dog pilot project ("Dog owners must learn new tricks," May 23) was unfairly critical of dog owners. You claim that dog owners are "howling" about the possibility of getting ticketed, but unwilling to take any responsibility for making the project a success.

To the contrary, dog owners are more than willing to help. A nonprofit organization formed by dog owners, Citizens for Safe Parks with Offleash Territory (C-SPOT), works with the parks bureau on the project.

Dog owners have formed Steward Groups, associated with the parks department, to care for their parks. Dog owners regularly encourage their peers to abide by park rules and be responsible for their pets.

The only thing dog owners ask in return for their cooperation is that the off-leash restrictions be reasonable. The vast majority of citizens want to share their parks with all types of park users. Let's not allow the intolerant minority to make this impossible.

DEAN LAND

OFF-LEASH RULES POORLY CRAFTED

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - June 1, 2004

Section: EDITORIAL; Page: B06

Dog owners in Portland are not "howling" without reason ("Dog owners must learn new tricks," May 23). The new off-leash rules were poorly crafted. Dog owners who work fulltime (8 a.m.-6 p.m.), under the new off-leash rules, are only allowed to use the parks before dawn or after dark. This is neither safe nor fair. There should be off-leash areas in all parks that are fenced off, well-lit and accessible to everyone during park hours.

You also suggest that dog owners pay \$25 per year for a park pass. Why should we pay extra to use our public parks? Do parents have to pay extra for their children to use the playground equipment?

At Mount Tabor Park, one is more likely to be hit by a cyclist or skateboarder breaking the park speed limit than to be bitten by an offleash dog. Where is the uproar for handing out speeding tickets?

CHRIS MICHEL

APPENDIX B: EDITORIAL ANALYSIS CODE LIST AND DESCRIPTIONS

The 17 topics listed below are the initial codes I used in the thematic analysis of the editorials listed in appendix A. Below each code is a description of how I conceived of each topic as I associated them with editorial arguments.

SOCIALIZATION

Mentions of non-aggressive social interaction between dogs

EXERCISE

Mentions of physical activity for dogs and their owners including dog-walking or dogs running off leash

COMMUNITY

Mentions of social interaction or identification between dog owners or direct use of the word “community” to describe broader neighborhood notions of community

DOG’S WELL-BEING

Mentions of places or activities that promote or threaten the health or safety of dogs

TAXPAYER

Mentions of paying taxes or being tax paying citizens

CHILDREN

Mentions of comparisons between the relationships, activities, needs, and spaces of dogs and human children

OTHER PARK USERS

Mentions of the safety or enjoyment of other parks being enhanced or compromised by the presence of dogs

LANDSCAPE

Mentions of dog’s impact on the landscapes of public parks or private homes

NATURAL

Mentions of dog’s impact on wildlife or natural habitat

SCOOP

Mentions of dog poop or pet owners not picking up after their dogs

SELF-GOVERNANCE

Mentions of off-leash area user fees or dog park users engaging in volunteer activity, fundraising, and user education or peer pressure enforcement of dog park policies

RESPONSIBILITY

Mentions of various notions of acceptable behavior or social obligations of pet owners, park users, community members, and local government

LEGALITY

Mention of the actions or identities of off leash dogs and their owners as illegal, or mentions of the informal appropriation of space by allowing dogs off leash in areas not designated for off-leash use

ENFORCEMENT

Mentions of official enforcement by city employees, parks department staff, park rangers, or county animal control officers

UPGRADED USE

Mentions of dogs and dog owners as better park users than other park users, in reference to the homeless, alcoholics, or drug dealers

HOUSING

Mentions of yards as off-leash areas and housing decisions based on dog amenities and park proximity

SUSTAINABILITY

Mentions of environmental concerns of climate change including transportation and neighborhood walkability

APPENDIX C: PORTLAND NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE METHODOLOGY

The methodology listed below details how I calculated racial and economic change throughout Portland from 2000 to 2015. My analysis begins at 2000 to capture the neighborhood characteristics during the siting of the off-leash areas approved in 2003. The analysis ends with the most recent U.S. Census ACS estimates available to analyze how the neighborhoods have changed since the establishment of the off-leash area network.

Datasets:

US Census Decennial Census 2000: population data points

- Race: Non-Hispanic: White Alone
- Median Household Income (2015 Inflation Adjusted Dollars)

US Census American Community Survey (ACS) 2011-2015 (5-Year Estimates): sample estimates with margins of error (MOE)

- Race: Non-Hispanic: White Alone
- Median Household Income (2015 Inflation Adjusted Dollars)

First, I calculated boundaries for the City of Portland change classifications. I calculated the high and low MOE range of the 2015 ACS estimates, and then the percentage change between the 2015 ACS high and low MOE estimates and the 2000 Census data points.

Block groups identified as *increase* experienced change greater than the high MOE of the citywide percent change estimate in both proportion of white population and median household income.

Block groups identified as *constant* experienced change within the MOE range of the citywide percent change estimates or opposite change (an increase and a decrease) in proportion of white population and median household income.

Block groups identified as *decrease* experienced change greater than the low MOE of the citywide percent change estimate in both proportion of white population and median household income.

Next, I calculated the coefficient of variation (CV) for the 2015 ACS block group estimates. I calculated the standard errors (SE) by dividing the MOE by 1.645 (90% confidence level), and calculated the CV by dividing the SE by the estimates. I removed any unreliable estimates if the RSE was above 0.50.

There were no unreliable race or income estimates. There were no missing race estimates, however, there were nine missing income estimates, but none of the missing estimates were of block groups containing off-leash areas. This nine block groups are listed as no data.

Next, I classified block groups into citywide change classifications. I identified block group change estimates by calculating the percentage change between the 2015 ACS estimates and the 2000 Census data points. Boundaries of change for race variable are less than -0.085 and greater than -0.076. Boundaries of change for income variable are less than -0.052 and greater than -0.022.

I identified *increase* block groups with race and income change estimates above Portland's high MOE for race and income. I identified *decrease* block groups with race and income change estimates below Portland's low MOE for race and income. I identified *constant* block groups with race and income change estimates within Portland's MOE for race and income OR opposite change estimates for race and income.

2000 - 2015 CENSUS GEOGRAPHY BOUNDARY CHANGES

To account for Census block group geography changes I overlaid 2000 and 2015 Census block group maps in GIS ArcMap to located block groups with boundary changes. Block groups were either the same geography reclassified with different identification codes or 2015 block groups split between two 2010 block groups, in which case I calculated the unweighted averages between the census geographies. Weighting for household counts provides more statistically accurate estimates for regression or projection analysis, but that level of accuracy is not necessary for this classification analysis of block groups with relatively small household counts.

APPENDIX D: OFF-LEASH AREA RACE AND INCOME CENSUS DATA

FIPS Code	Off-Leash Area	White2000	White2015	White Change
410510001001	<i>Sellwood Riverfront</i>	80%	87%	10%
410510004012	<i>Woodstock</i>	86%	72%	-17%
410510006013	<i>Lents</i>	83%	61%	-27%
410510008024	<i>Creston</i>	71%	65%	-8%
410510013023	<i>Sewallcrest</i>	73%	88%	21%
410510016014	<i>Mt. Tabor</i>	83%	83%	0%
410510019003	<i>Laurelhurst</i>	93%	88%	-5%
410510024011	<i>Irving</i>	75%	86%	15%
410510026003	<i>Grant</i>	88%	84%	-6%
410510027022	<i>Frazer</i>	84%	79%	-6%
410510028023	<i>Normandale</i>	69%	80%	15%
410510030004	<i>Wilshire</i>	89%	90%	1%
410510035022	<i>Overlook</i>	76%	82%	9%
410510036023	<i>Alberta</i>	51%	58%	15%
410510036032	<i>Fernhill</i>	44%	72%	63%
410510039021	<i>Arbor Lodge</i>	83%	91%	9%
410510041014	<i>Chimney</i>	70%	74%	7%
410510042002	<i>Cathedral</i>	66%	81%	22%
410510047001	<i>Wallace</i>	93%	81%	-13%
410510049003	<i>Couch</i>	84%	77%	-7%
410510051001	<i>The Fields</i>	79%	86%	9%
410510058005	<i>Council Crest</i>	99%	98%	0%
410510059001	<i>Willamette</i>	93%	83%	-11%
410510061002	<i>Hillsdale</i>	81%	92%	14%
410510066023	<i>Gabriel</i>	83%	94%	14%
410510072021	<i>Delta / Portland Int.</i>	76%	54%	-28%
410510076001	<i>Sacajawea</i>	72%	69%	-5%
410510082012	<i>Cherry</i>	81%	66%	-18%
410510087002	<i>Brentwood</i>	69%	82%	20%
410510093022	<i>East Holladay</i>	80%	53%	-34%
410510095012	<i>Argay</i>	70%	60%	-14%
410510098042	<i>Lynchwood</i>	82%	68%	-18%

FIPS Code	Off-Leash Area	Income2000	Income2015	Income Change
410510001001	<i>Sellwood Riverfront</i>	\$50,054	\$63,036	26%
410510004012	<i>Woodstock</i>	\$53,698	\$68,056	27%
410510006013	<i>Lents</i>	\$55,121	\$34,309	-38%
410510008024	<i>Creston</i>	\$45,852	\$45,052	-2%
410510013023	<i>Sewallcrest</i>	\$89,438	\$90,625	1%
410510016014	<i>Mt. Tabor</i>	\$54,780	\$57,102	4%
410510019003	<i>Laurelhurst</i>	\$125,974	\$106,023	-16%
410510024011	<i>Irving</i>	\$112,292	\$137,679	23%
410510026003	<i>Grant</i>	\$92,206	\$102,500	11%
410510027022	<i>Frazer</i>	\$36,303	\$49,883	37%
410510028023	<i>Normandale</i>	\$55,121	\$53,375	-3%
410510030004	<i>Wilshire</i>	\$106,559	\$98,611	-7%
410510035022	<i>Overlook</i>	\$73,080	\$103,864	42%
410510036023	<i>Alberta</i>	\$55,683	\$67,817	22%
410510036032	<i>Fernhill</i>	\$66,501	\$72,000	8%
410510039021	<i>Arbor Lodge</i>	\$57,047	\$61,250	7%
410510041014	<i>Chimney</i>	\$64,189	\$58,875	-8%
410510042002	<i>Cathedral</i>	\$35,829	\$38,564	8%
410510047001	<i>Wallace</i>	\$73,586	\$96,250	31%
410510049003	<i>Couch</i>	\$34,053	\$36,583	7%
410510051001	<i>The Fields</i>	\$49,024	\$76,987	57%
410510058005	<i>Council Crest</i>	\$145,711	\$136,042	-7%
410510059001	<i>Willamette</i>	\$75,569	\$83,077	10%
410510061002	<i>Hillsdale</i>	\$88,068	\$78,269	-11%
410510066023	<i>Gabriel</i>	\$52,478	\$77,426	48%
410510072021	<i>Delta / Portland Int.</i>	\$70,065	\$58,750	-16%
410510076001	<i>Sacajawea</i>	\$38,249	\$57,917	51%
410510082012	<i>Cherry</i>	\$67,158	\$59,643	-11%
410510087002	<i>Brentwood</i>	\$55,248	\$56,875	3%
410510093022	<i>East Holladay</i>	\$63,673	\$46,128	-28%
410510095012	<i>Argay</i>	\$57,179	\$42,917	-25%
410510098042	<i>Lynchwood</i>	\$65,905	\$44,107	-33%