

Why is Maplewood considering a off leash dog area?

Over the last few years more and more cities in the metro area have decided to build off leash dog areas. With the success of both the sites in Ramsey County and other towns around Maplewood, people are using these sites and wish they had sites closer to home. And with the work done by the University of Minnesota and the Sustainable Maplewood 2050 project, and the survey they did as part of their report. That survey showed that there was interest for a "off leash dog area" in Maplewood. There was a suitable amount of response in the Sherwood Park and Western Hills Park area plus comments made that Maplewood residents think that a dog park in Maplewood would be a good idea.

After the University of Minnesota Capstone project was presented to the Park and Recreation Commission in 2008, it was decided that the commission should put together a task force to look into the possibility of Maplewood having a "off leash dog area". We looked into the idea of should Maplewood have one, more than one or not have one at all. And we should study the issue thoroughly and come back to the Park and Recreation Commission on what we have found.

The study of OLDA was done in a number of phases starting in the summer of 2008 and a tour of some parks in Ramsey County. We looked at parks in White Bear Lake, Otter Lake Regional Park, Woodview Park in Roseville, Reserve Park in Roseville and Arlington / Arkwright Park on the east side of St. Paul. We were also informed of other dog parks in the twin cities and we visited many on our own. Like in Bloomington, Eden Prairie, Edina, Minneapolis, Plymouth and in Lauderdale among many more.

Summary of what we did the Process

We looked at websites

Toured sites in 2008

Talked to city staff in other communities like Eden Prairie, New Hope, Burnsville and many others.

Looked at books, magazines, newspapers

City Park tour in May, 2009

Capstone Project

AKC.org web site

Looked at what other cities did with hockey rink sites

Doing a survey and what type of questions should be asked

Survey

We talked about the need for a survey and decided that it is important to do a survey and that there should be one. We believe that the best way for a survey is to work with city staff to come up with questions. We as members of the "OLDA" task force will be glad to work with staff to come up with a list of questions with their help. We think it should be sent to people close to the area where any "OLDA" would be considered. Also in the area where a possible mini or hockey rink site might be considered.

It is important for the city to know information to get an accurate reflection of the neighborhood that a park might be located. Some questions that might be asked?

Community benefits

What the design should include?

What should be considered?

Role of neighbors

Amenities of "OLDA"

What is a Off Leash Dog Area and how will it Benefit Maplewood

With cities becoming more and more crowded and leash laws becoming more restrictive many concerned dog owners are looking to the creation of dog parks as a solution to their need for a place to spend quality time with their pets. But what is a "dog park" and what are the benefits it can bring to Maplewood.

Dog parks or Off Leash Dog Areas is a public park, typically fenced, where people and their dogs can play together. Similarly, a dog run is a smaller fenced area, created for the same use, that is often located within an existing park. As the name implies, these places offer dogs off-leash play areas where their owners can enjoy a park like setting and the chance to socialize with other canines. And dogs with their owners. Dog parks, which are managed by park users in conjunction with city officials, are being established all over the country. They offer a wealth of benefits to dogs, dog owners and the community as a whole.

In the Twin City Metro area a number of towns now have off leash dog areas, they include St. Paul, Minneapolis, Eden Prairie, Coon Rapids, Burnsville, Lauderdale, Roseville, White Bear Lake, Crystal and many more. Ramsey County also has four off leash areas. Also many other cities in the metro area are now considering off leash dog areas.

Allows dogs to exercise and socialize safely. Puppies and adult dogs need room to run, and enclosed play areas permit them to do so while preventing them from endangering themselves and others (for example, by running into the path of an oncoming vehicle). In addition, dogs who are accustomed to playing with animals and people other than their owners are more likely to be well-socialized and react well to strangers.

Promotes responsible dog ownership. Dog parks prevent off-leash animals from infringing on the rights of other community residents and park users such as joggers, small children and those fearful of dogs. Dog areas also make it easier for the city to enforce its leash laws, as residents dog owners with park access have no reason to allow their canine companions off-leash when outside of the park.

Make for a better community by promoting public health and safety. Well exercised dogs are better neighbors who are less likely to create a nuisance, bark excessively and destroy property. Their presence in the park, along with their owners also helps to deter crime.

Provides an outlet for dog owners to socialize. Dog parks are a great place for owners to meet other people and meet with their neighbors. The love people share for their dogs reaches beyond economic and social barriers and helps to foster a sense of community. Park users also benefit from the opportunity to ask questions to other owners and find solutions to problems they might be having with their pet. Or just to spend time talking about what's going on in their neighborhood.

Things to do to start an "off leash dog area" in Maplewood

The ideal off leash dog area should include

- Concern for the environment.
- One acre or larger. (not for mini OLDA)
- 4' to 6' fence surrounding area.
- Entry-double gated.
- Shade area and a water supply.
- Adequate drainage.
- Parking close to site.
- Grass area and routine mowing.
- Covered garbage cans with regular trash removal.
- Pooper scooper station with plastic bags.
- Bench or chairs.
- Safe location, not isolated.
- Keep up with regular maintenance.
- Educate fellow dog owners.
- Solicit input from our Community.
- Wheel chair access.

Things to consider Before Developing a "OLDA"

- Appropriate site selection.
- Noise level for dog distraction.
- Noise level for neighbor distraction.
- Maintenance and health concerns.
- City support.
- Traffic and parking concerns.
- Supervision of park.
- Laws and law enforcement.
- Local regulations.
- Insurance requirements.
- How many dogs would use.
- Demographics of area.
- Who uses park now?

Develop role for Dog Area group

- Raise funds for amenities.
- Monitor use.
- Clean up.
- Supply clean up bags.
- Communication liaison with city.
- Get neighbors and dog owners involved.

Why the community would benefit

- Socializes and exercises dogs in a safe environment.
- Promotes responsible pet ownership.
- Enables dogs to legally run off-leash.
- Provides elderly and disabled owners with accessible place to exercise their companions.
- Promotes public health and safety.
- Provides a tool for realistic enforcement of dog control laws.

Amenities

Fence- About four feet high with a double gate entry in the cyclone style.

Trash Barrel- inside the dog area with a enclosed lid and cover.

Signage-with rules to explain use, rules and hours.

Bench or Chairs-weather proof to be used inside dog area.

Shelter or Shade Area-can be used by the use of trees, or artificial source.

Water Source-not necessary, however this would be a plus otherwise people would have to bring their own water.

Plastic Bags for Waste And Dispenser

Recycle Barrel

City Bulletin Board

Parking-must have enough off and on street parking.

Lights-most dog parks don't have lights.

Walkway-to entrance does not have to be paved. But could be from parking area or trail.

Some possible ideas that could be done in the future

Programming-could do puppy training/dog behavior classes in the summer for a fee. This could be contracted out.

Agility Equipment-this is something that could be added later this could also be donated.

Water Source-this could be a man made source, or a natural source.

Container for Toys-this would be a small box by entrance.

For Hockey Rink Mini Site

Gate Closure-replaces one section of boards in summer

Trash Container-with cover and lid

Plastic bags-for waste

Signage-with rules to explain use and rules.

Bulletin Board

Leave Surface as is

Parking

Water Source

Lights-could use existing hockey rink lights

Funding

We have added the section from the University of Minnesota Capstone Project, with their suggestions. What Maplewood needs to do is determine how much it will cost to construct and maintain a "OLDA", this would include fences, garbage removal, maintenance, drinking water, drainage, lighting, poupercouper station and other costs.

Dog areas in other communities have been financed thru the city itself. And that could be true in Maplewood to. Other communities work with groups committed to maintaining the park and ensuring that park rules are followed. Sharing expences is a great way for both the city and any community groups to expand good public relations.

Funding

Other ways to help finance are user fees-requiring all dog park users to pay a annual or daily fee. Permits could be obtained from Maplewood for dog park use. Another idea is to have a fee added on to the cities dog license, to be used to develop and maintain the "OLDA". Fundraisers are also used in many communities to raise funds. Another idea is to put a donation tube by the entrance site. This would be a voluntary donation. (It should be noted that at Como Zoo in St. Paul they have a donation station by the door and they raise a great deal of funds that way.)

Other ideas include

- Donations from dog and pet lovers.
- Working with animal groups
- Pet stores in Maplewood
- Larger Big Box stores (like Home Depot and Menards)
- Working with veterinarians in Maplewood and surrounding towns
- Could have a pet or dog expo at the Maplewood Community Center this could become a annual event.
- Fund raising events could be held at "OLDA"
- Donations of equipment or supplies

We have received ideas to raise funds from a number of people. From donations to having drawings where people could sign up and pay a entry fee to be in a drawing to win free gifts donated from local businesses or a one year permit to use dog park. If a user fee is used. Having a lot of public input will make a "OLDA" in Maplewood known and used by the people of Maplewood.

Dog Park

There is a lack of published research on the social and biophysical effects of dog parks. The experiences of nearby dog parks in adjacent municipalities can provide a good sense of what effects a new dog park may have on the environment and what role they can play in facilitating ongoing community building. Much of the information gathered about dog parks came from a November 3, 2008, interview with John Moriarty of St. Paul Public Works Department who had experience in developing a dog park in St. Paul.

The opinions and feedback of residents must be considered when locating the ideal site for a dog park. Neighborhoods with high levels of support for the development of a dog park should be given special consideration in the search for an appropriate site. First and foremost, a dog park should not be developed in ecologically sensitive areas, and durable vegetation is preferable. Dog park users often enjoy adjacent water features, but it is not an absolute necessity. Caution must be exercised when considering dog related activities, because dogs can easily destroy all shoreline vegetation. Ideally, any water feature, if present, should have a durable sandy or old paved shoreline.

Sherwood Glen and Western Hills had exemplary levels of support for a dog park in Maplewood combined with the perception among residents that a dog park would be an asset to their neighborhoods. Sherwood Glen had an average level of support of 3.92 which can be equated to a moderate level of support, and 90% of respondents thought a dog park would be an asset to their neighborhood and 10% perceived a dog park would be a liability. Western Hills had an average level of support of 3.73, and 93.3% of respondents thought a dog park would be an asset to their neighborhood, while only 6.7% perceived a dog park to be a liability if located in their neighborhood.

Effective Management and Consistent Funding

Funding

The Park Development Fund provides money for improvement projects in the neighborhood and mini parks throughout Maplewood. This fund has been financially supported as a levy, which has been applied to all new buildings that have been constructed in Maplewood. When Maplewood was a growing community, this fund provided the parks with a stable stream of revenue that helped fund park maintenance and improvement on a regular basis. As of 2008, Maplewood has been more than 90% developed and there is a limited amount of new development that can and will occur. As a result, there is a limited amount of money to provide ongoing support to the Parks Development Fund. In order to maintain and improve the neighborhood and mini parks, a new stable source of revenue is needed to support these programs.

A user fee would allow the financial burden to be placed on only those that use the parks in Maplewood. However, imposing a user fee might discourage park use among area residents. A one-time referendum would supply a short-term fund for the parks, but over time it would become depleted. Tax levies would be the most consistent form of revenue that would allow the parks to manage day-to-day operations, as well as provide money to

make necessary improvements to move toward a more sustainable park system. Similar to other park systems in the metro area, such as the Three Rivers Park District, a levy can be placed on property taxes that would be dedicated entirely to the parks fund. Another source of taxes to be considered is from sales made within the City of Maplewood. This would ensure that a long-term sustainable source of funding is secured in order to allow the implementation of an extended plan to create a sustainable parks system. It is recognized, however, that the passing of a tax upon residents would be difficult until a larger vested interest in the park system is established and may not be an immediate option.

Although grants and donations are welcome additions to the parks development fund, these revenue streams cannot be counted on for a long-term financial plan. Grants which are available one year may disappear in the following year and leave a deficit in the financial plans. Grants can be sought at the local, state and federal level to help alleviate the costs of large projects.

Conclusion

With the drafting of a new vision for a sustainable Maplewood, the City has embarked on a transformational path toward becoming a model of suburban sustainability and environmental stewardship. Maplewood has committed to the protection, maintenance, and restoration of the natural environments that form the foundation of a healthy economy, an active citizenry, and a thriving community. As some of the most ecologically diverse and vibrant green spaces in the city, it should go without saying that sustainable management of parks is central to their mission.

The ecological functions of parks are practically innumerable. Undeveloped land with good vegetative cover helps to mitigate pollution associated with storm water runoff, and denser vegetative cover in parks can create a haven for wildlife in the city. Perhaps most importantly, living in close proximity to natural environments can help instill in people a stronger environmental ethic that will guide thoughtful decision making to benefit current and future generations.

Beyond the associated ecological benefits, a well managed park system is also an asset to a community by serving as a venue for citizens to interact and to recreate. Understanding community values and citizens' interests is essential to providing recreational opportunities that fulfill the needs and preferences of a diverse community.

Determination of site selection and tour sites

At our april meeting we went through the process of picking out sites for our tour. Two sites were decided from the survey of the UofM capstone project they were Sherwood Park and Western Hills Park. A third site Joy Park was decided by talk of area residents and from members of the Park and Recreation Commission. We also decided that we should visit a site with a hockey rink for a possible mini park.

Then we went through the list of all Maplewood parks. Looking at the features in each park, and a map of the park. We talked about each park as a group, then we voted on it as a tour stop.

We came up with this list

Sherwood

Western Hills

Joy

Harvest (both north and south)

Gloster

Flick

Kohlman

Four Seasons (for the hockey rink)

Two other sites Roselawn Park and a non-park site by Rice St. and Sandy Lake were considered, but were ruled out because of bad access and parking concerns.

We then visited the sites for our may meeting and came up with a check list of all possible sites. It should be noted that we did not make it to Joy Park because of darkness. We did agree to visit Joy Park on our own and talk about it at our June meeting. We went as a group right after our tour to talk about each park while things were still very fresh. And we were open to more discussion at our June meeting.

Hockey Rink sites for 'mini park'

The information about mini dog parks and the success they were having was very interesting. Towns like Eden Prairie and Crystal are using them. What is the great thing about them is that they make unused summer areas in our parks usable all year long, at a minimal expense to the city. A special gate and some signage and a few amenities is what it takes. We think the mini park is a good idea, and should be used. This could be started as a pilot project of one hockey rink and with success could be added to all hockey rink sites in Maplewood.

Pros and Cons

In the process of looking at the idea of a "Off Leash Dog Area" we wanted to know what makes a dog area good or why it could be bad idea. So we spent most of our March meeting, talking about this. Many areas were discussed both pro and con. And here are a few.

pros

Keeps dogs active
make use of unused parts of park
keeps dogs more healthy
less crime
less aggressive dogs
more people activity
meet neighbors
gets more dogs licenced
keeps dogs on leash in other parks

cons

dog dumping
abandoned dogs
enforcement
cost and up-keep
injuries to dogs
injuries to humans
parking concerns
noise and lights
scare off wild life

In deciding how we were going to continue we wanted to pick sites that would make the most of the pro's and take away as much of the con's as possible.

Final Decission

With so many communities both in the metro area, but also around the country starting "Off Leash Dog Areas", with great deal of success. We believe that having a "Maplewood" dog area would be a good idea. Although Ramsey County has a site in the southern portion of Maplewood, having a site of it's own would serve the residents and dog owners well. As for a site for a "OLDA" we thought three parks had the most potential, Harvest, Gloster and Sherwood Parks. And that the final two were equal in being the best sites overall. We also think that the mini park or hockey rink sites are not a subsititute for a full size Off Leash Dog Area but will compliment it.

Members of our committee:

Dave Johnson
Bruce Roman (chair)
Therese Sonnek
Kim Schmidt

Maplewood Parks description checklist for a possible dog park

Park name _____

Parking spots available: Off street _____ On street _____

Terrain: _____ Flat _____ slightly hilly _____ hilly _____ open field
_____ partly wooded _____ mostly wooded

Are there trails? _____ none _____ turf/foot _____ paved

Natural water available _____ yes _____ no

If so: _____ lake _____ pond _____ seasonal ponding

Approximate size of area to be considered: _____

Approximate area in park to be considered (list closest streets and park landmarks nearby):

Where would a good entrance to a fence be located?

How far is that from the parking available? _____

Are there any natural barriers (existing fences, steep hills, waterline?)

Maplewood Parks description checklist for a possible dog park

Park name Sherwood-neighborhood

Parking spots available: Off street ✓32 On street GOOD parking very good

Terrain: ✓ Flat ✓ slightly hilly _____ hilly _____ open field
_____ partly wooded _____ mostly wooded

Are there trails? _____ none _____ turf/foot ✓ paved

Natural water available ✓ yes _____ no

If so: ✓ lake _____ pond _____ seasonal ponding

Approximate size of area to be considered: 5 acre

Approximate area in park to be considered (list closest streets and park landmarks nearby):

Western end of open area in former soccer field area,

Where would a good entrance to a fence be located?

Would have to walk from parking area to western portion of park

How far is that from the parking available? 500 ft.

Are there any natural barriers (existing fences, steep hills, waterline?) ✓

man made trail on north side

Maplewood Parks description checklist for a possible dog park

Park name Harvest North-Community

Parking spots available: Off street On street No upgrade for parking needed.

Terrain: Flat slightly hilly hilly open field
 partly wooded mostly wooded

Are there trails? none turf/foot paved - some
NEXT TO BRUCE VENTO TRAIL

Natural water available yes no

If so: lake pond seasonal ponding

Approximate size of area to be considered: 3 to 5
25 acre total park

Approximate area in park to be considered (list closest streets and park landmarks nearby):
would have to be close to parking lot

Where would a good entrance to a fence be located?
by parking lot

How far is that from the parking available? close

Are there any natural barriers (existing fences, steep hills, waterline)?
existing ball fields

Maplewood Parks description checklist for a possible dog park

Park name Harvest South-Community

Parking spots available: Off street _____ On street No Upgrade for parking needed.

Terrain: Flat _____ slightly hilly _____ hilly _____ open field
_____ partly wooded _____ mostly wooded

Are there trails? _____ none _____ turf/foot paved - some
next to Bruce Ventot Trail

Natural water available _____ yes no

If so: _____ lake _____ pond _____ seasonal ponding

Approximate size of area to be considered: 3 to 6 acre
25 acre for whole park

Approximate area in park to be considered (list closest streets and park landmarks nearby):

GERVAIS ON FAR SOUTH SIDE

Where would a good entrance to a fence be located?

CLOSE TO THE ROAD - Lots of good street parking

How far is that from the parking available? 100 feet

Are there any natural barriers (existing fences, steep hills, waterline?)

some hills on east side

Maplewood Parks description checklist for a possible dog park

Park name Fleck - Neighborhood + community

Parking spots available: Off street 26 On street a few other side of street
parking fair

Terrain: Flat slightly hilly hilly open field
 partly wooded mostly wooded

Are there trails? none turf/foot paved GATEWAY TRAIL

Natural water available yes no

If so: lake pond seasonal ponding

Approximate size of area to be considered: 1 1/2 acre or 4 acre if field used

Approximate area in park to be considered (list closest streets and park landmarks nearby):

Fleck parking lot - used for ball field
and gateway trail.

Where would a good entrance to a fence be located?

By Parking Lot.

How far is that from the parking available? very close

Are there any natural barriers (existing fences, steep hills, waterline)?

some fence areas
Being close to trail is a plus.

Maplewood Parks description checklist for a possible dog park

Park name GLOSTER - could be neighborhood or Community

Parking spots available: Off street 35 On street could upgrade latter

Terrain: Flat slightly hilly hilly open field
 partly wooded mostly wooded

Are there trails? none turf/foot paved

Natural water available yes no

If so: lake pond seasonal ponding

Approximate size of area to be considered: 3 acre up to 5 acre
total 6 acre

Approximate area in park to be considered (list closest streets and park landmarks nearby):

Frost - next to GLOSTER TOT LOT
exit off of Frost - close to parking area, down hill.

Where would a good entrance to a fence be located?

North west corner of park by Parking lot.

How far is that from the parking available? CLOSE

Are there any natural barriers (existing fences, steep hills, waterline?)

yes - trees ON ONE SIDE.

Maplewood Parks description checklist for a possible dog park

Park name Western Hill Neighborhood

Parking spots available: Off street ✓ 15 cars On street ✓ parking bad

Terrain: _____ Flat ✓ slightly hilly _____ hilly _____ open field
_____ partly wooded _____ mostly wooded

Are there trails? _____ none _____ turf/foot ✓ paved

Natural water available _____ yes ✓ no

If so: _____ lake _____ pond _____ seasonal ponding

Approximate size of area to be considered: 2 areas could work
North - 4 acre
South 3 acre

Approximate area in park to be considered (list closest streets and park landmarks nearby):

North or South

Where would a good entrance to a fence be located?

By Parking Lot

How far is that from the parking available? 500 ft. North.
100 ft South

Are there any natural barriers (existing fences, steep hills, waterline)?

would have to work with trail that is already there.

Maplewood Parks description checklist for a possible dog park

Park name Kohlman - neighborhood

Parking spots available: Off street 10 On street very small parking lot

Terrain: Flat slightly hilly hilly open field
 partly wooded mostly wooded

Are there trails? none turf/foot paved

Natural water available yes no

If so: lake pond seasonal ponding

Approximate size of area to be considered: 2 to 4 acres

Approximate area in park to be considered (list closest streets and park landmarks nearby):

along County Road C - long strip on north side of park.

Where would a good entrance to a fence be located?

present road by parking lot.

How far is that from the parking available? 50 ft.

Are there any natural barriers (existing fences, steep hills, waterline)?

No - We looked at site before construction

Maplewood Parks description checklist for a possible dog park

Park name Four Seasons - Seasonal Dog Area

Parking spots available: Off street ✓ 15 cars On street ✓

Terrain: ✓ Flat _____ slightly hilly _____ hilly _____ open field
_____ partly wooded _____ mostly wooded

Are there trails? _____ none _____ turf/foot ✓ paved

Natural water available _____ yes ✓ no

If so: _____ lake _____ pond _____ seasonal ponding

Approximate size of area to be considered: hockey rink on south side
total park 10 acre

Approximate area in park to be considered (list closest streets and park landmarks nearby):

Hockey Rink in Park

Where would a good entrance to a fence be located?

East Side of rink

How far is that from the parking available? 100 ft.

Are there any natural barriers (existing fences, steep hills, waterline)?

No - Use from April to Oct.

For Small Dogs

Maplewood Parks description checklist for a possible dog park

Park name HILLSIDE - COMMUNITY

Parking spots available: Off street On street Next to none, would have to build parking lot

Terrain: Flat most slightly hilly some hilly open field
 partly wooded mostly wooded

Are there trails? none turf/foot paved

Natural water available yes no

If so: lake pond seasonal ponding

Approximate size of area to be considered: 3 to 5 acre
total 11 acre

Approximate area in park to be considered (list closest streets and park landmarks nearby):

Mentle Street Entrance

Where would a good entrance to a fence be located?

North east CORNER

How far is that from the parking available? Street - 200 feet

Are there any natural barriers (existing fences, steep hills, waterline)?

Trees

Maplewood Parks description checklist for a possible dog park

Park name Joy - Neighborhood Preserves

Parking spots available: Off street On street might need extra parking?

Terrain: Flat slightly hilly hilly open field
 partly wooded mostly wooded

Are there trails? none turf/foot paved

Natural water available yes no

If so: lake pond seasonal ponding

Approximate size of area to be considered: 3 to 5 acre
21 park acre
39 preserve acre

Approximate area in park to be considered (list closest streets and park landmarks nearby):

WE DID NOT TOUR THIS SITE AS A GROUP
WE RAN OUT OF DAYLIGHT, BUT MORE THEN
ONE SITE POSSIBLE, JOY ROAD

Where would a good entrance to a fence be located?

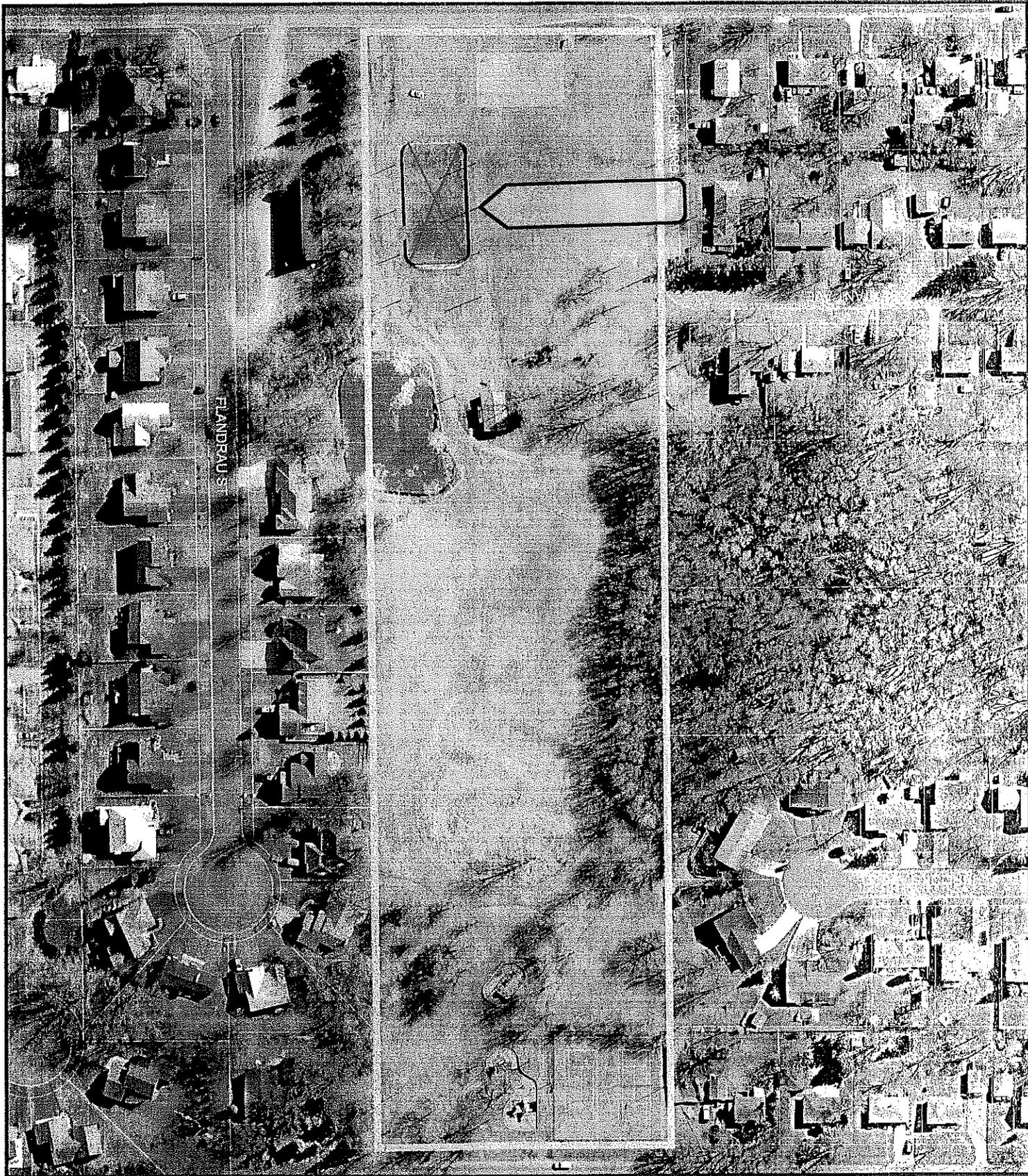
By TRAIL

How far is that from the parking available? CLOSE

Are there any natural barriers (existing fences, steep hills, waterline)?

Yes

Northeast corner of Maplewood.



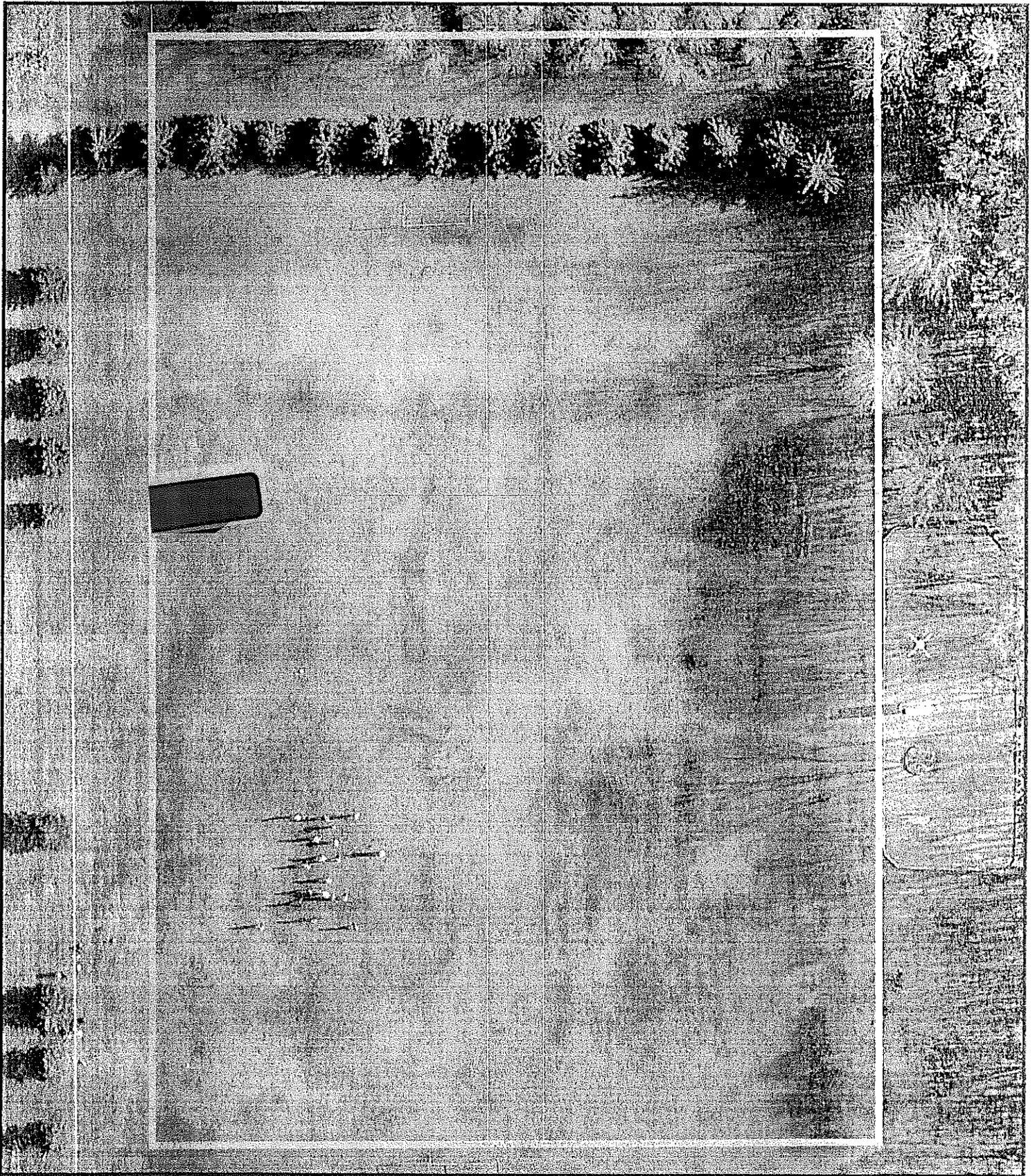
1685 Gervais Ave
9.48 Acres
Sep 29, 2009

Four Seasons Park

Together We Can

MAPLEWOOD





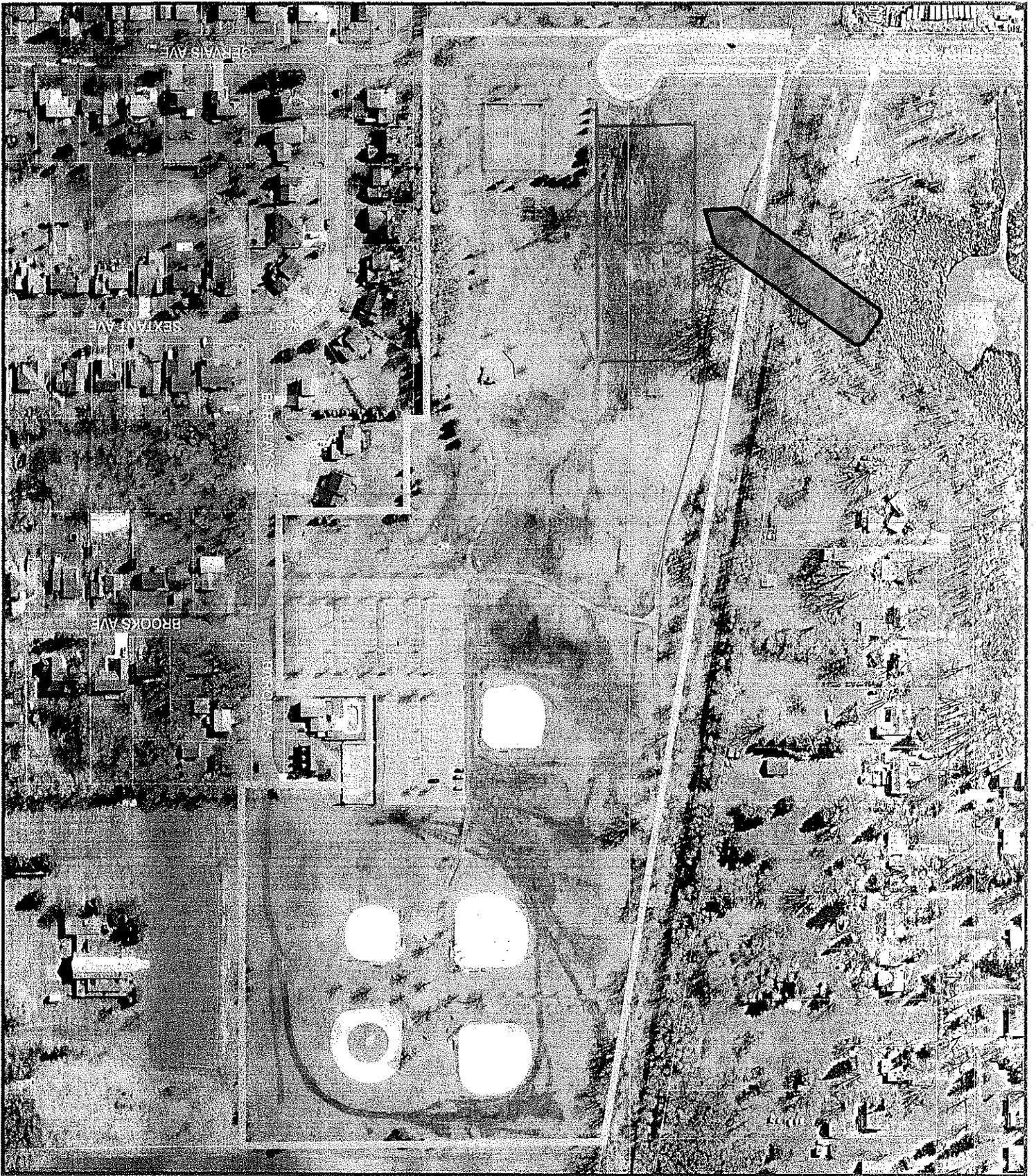
1839 Frank St
2.71 Acres
Sep 29, 2009

Gloster Park

MAPLEWOOD

Together We Can





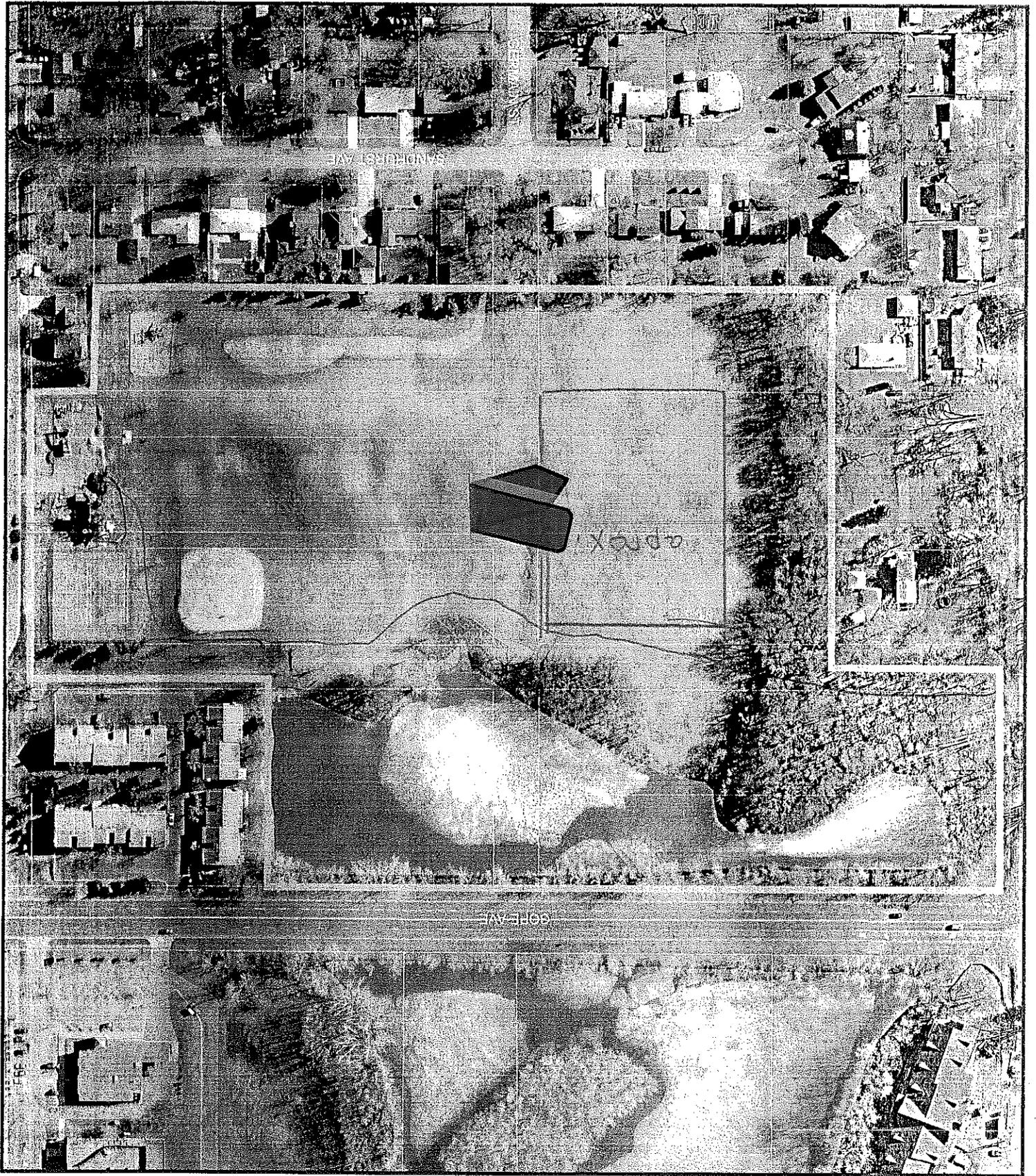
2561 Barclay St
30.06 Acres
Sep 29, 2009

Harvest Park

MAPLEWOOD



Joining the City



2237 Kennard St
17.94 Acres
Sep 29, 2009

Sherwood Park

MAPLEWOOD

Together We Can

