

# **Town of Reading**

## **Reading Dog Park Proposal**

**October 5, 2023**





# Dogs in Reading

- Reading households: Over 10,155 \*
- Reading households with dogs: Over 2,823 \*  
(3,000-3,100?)
- Registered and *known* unregistered dogs: Over 3,332 \*

Registered: 2,605 \*

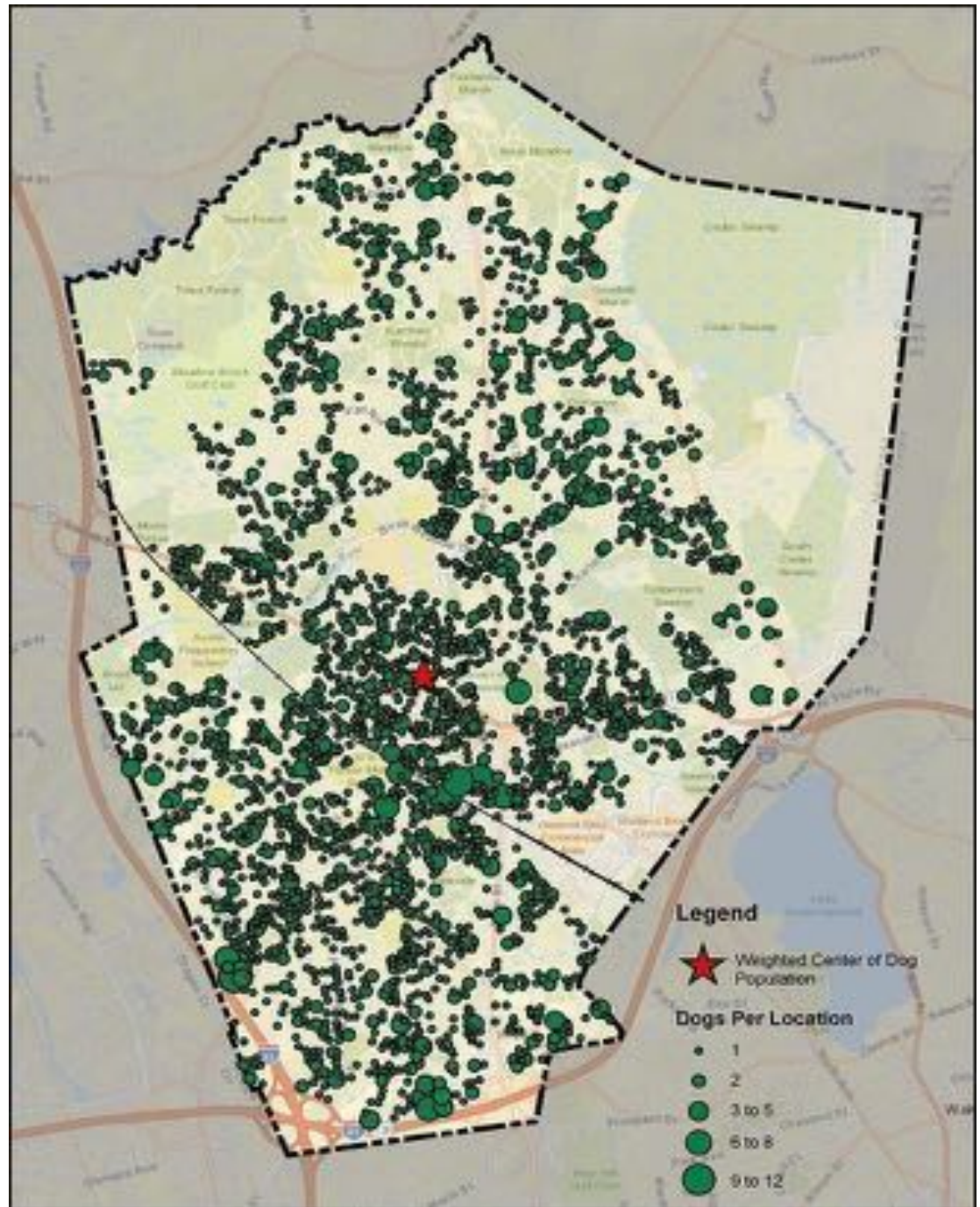
Unregistered: 727 \*

- Additional unregistered dogs (est.): 100-200?

\* Latest figures per Reading Town Clerk, 7/20/2023.



# Dogs in Reading



# Why Does Reading Need a Dog Park?

- A dog park is as essential as basketball courts, tennis courts, pickleball courts, playgrounds, ice skating, parks, trails, and beer gardens on the Common.

Most of these amenities benefit only segments of the population that are primarily in certain age ranges, are fit enough, and have long enough blocks of time available to use them, and often require organizing groups of 2 or more people and scheduling time slots.

## **However...**

- *A dog park is uniquely inclusive.* It potentially benefits every Reading dog owner and occasional non-owner, regardless of age, fitness level or daily schedule, alone or with other people, with 10 minutes or a couple of hours to spend, in company or relative solitude, with local relaxation, enjoyment and even exercise, with and for their canine companions.

# Benefits of a Dog Park

- **A dog park strengthens a dog's physical and emotional health and socialization.**
  - A place for dogs to play safely, off leash.
  - A safe, healthy activity for individuals and families with their dogs.
  - Reduced risks from ticks, poisonous plants, dirty water, vehicles, and other health hazards.
  - Eliminates the “leash anxiety” that affects many dogs.
  - Dogs learn to socialize with other dogs and people.
- **An alternative to walking dogs on town sidewalks, in the streets, in the Reading Town Forest, and on local trails.**
- **Reduced “waste” left on streets, in yards, in parks (e.g., Washington Park), and on trails.**
- **A social opportunity for families, the very young, the elderly, those who are physically limited, and others.**
- **Dog owners gain knowledge about caring for their dogs from other owners.**
- **A community gathering place.**
- **A town amenity that enhances overall property values.**





# Stanton Foundation Grant



- Funds up to \$25,000 for dog park design.
- Funds up to \$250,000 (90%) for construction.
- Stanton has funded at least 47 dog parks to date.
- Funding “sunsets” this December.

## Essential requirements to be eligible:

- Select a location.
- Submit grant application by Dec. 31, 2023.
- Property must be Town-Owned, AND committed at application.

[www.TheStantonFoundation.org](http://www.TheStantonFoundation.org)



# What Makes a Great Dog Park?

Design elements that make a dog park safe and convenient to access, safe to be there, fun for dogs and owners:

- Double-gated entry for dogs and people. Wide gate for DPW access.
- Separate areas for all dogs and small dogs. (Gloucester has 4 sections.)
- Secure fencing all around.
- Internal low-fenced areas to prevent collisions between dogs and people.
- Shade (from the sun). Simple shelter (from the weather).
- Water Stations. Optionally, pools (as at the Billerica Dog Park).
- Seating (benches, tree stumps).
- Waste bag dispensers. Waste barrels for bag and trash disposal.
- Ground cover (easy on dogs' feet and bodies, ideally low absorption of liquid).
- Agility equipment (e.g., 3-foot diameter pipe, ramp, jump, hurdles).
- Signage for rules, expectations, guidelines, suggestions, tips.
- Maintenance (regular waste bag replenishment, waste barrel pickup, cleaning, safety checks, ground cover and fence maintenance).
- Lighting (for safety and convenience, especially late fall through early spring).



# WILMINGTON



## Wilmington Dog Park

**All Dogs  
13,500 ft<sup>2</sup>**

Sand surface - Tree shade - Benches  
Agility items (hoop, large pipe, ramp, etc.)  
However, NO water or trash containers.

**Small and young dogs  
6,600 ft<sup>2</sup>**



# PEABODY





# PEABODY





# BURLINGTON





# BURLINGTON



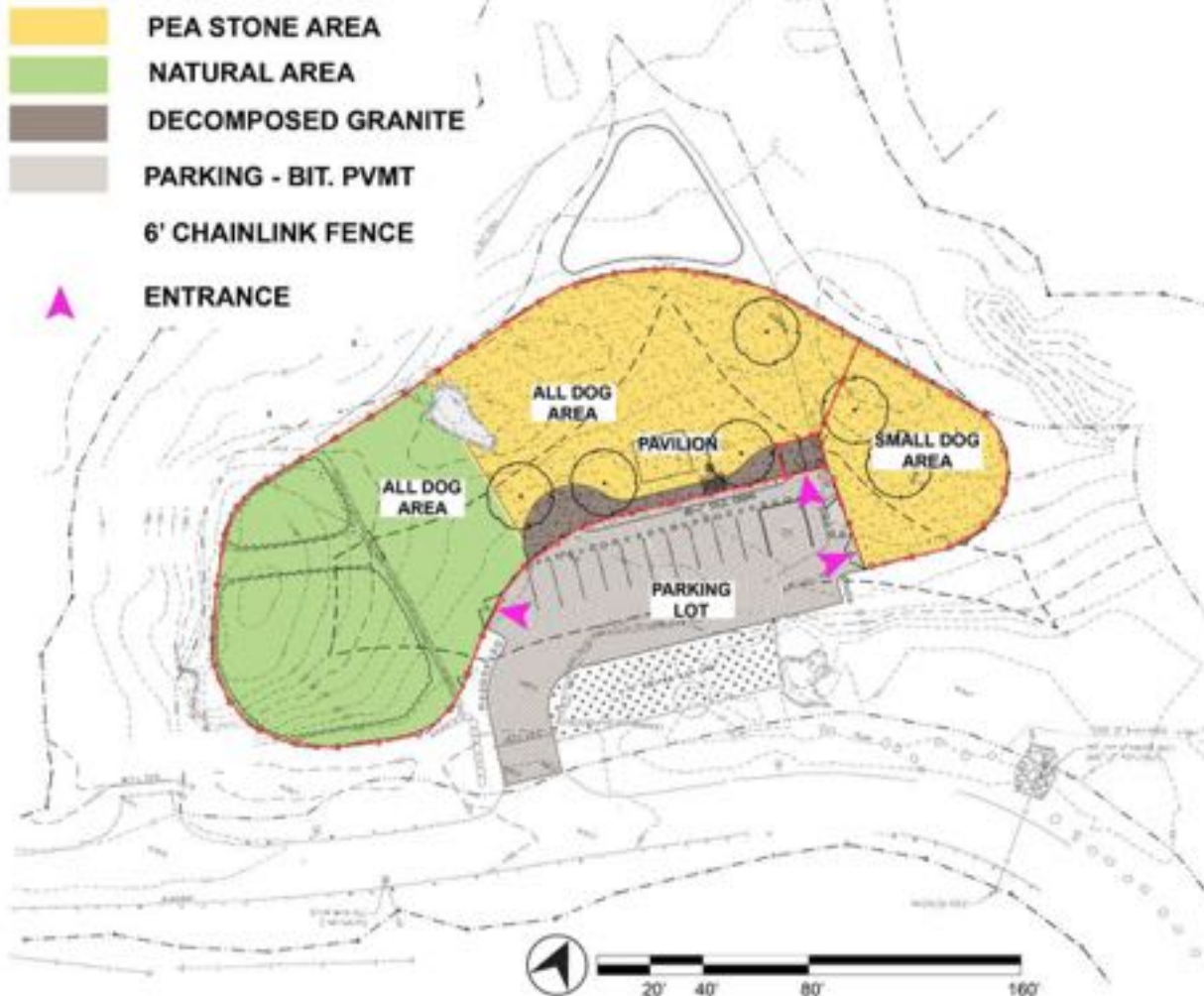


# BILLERICA





# BILLERICA



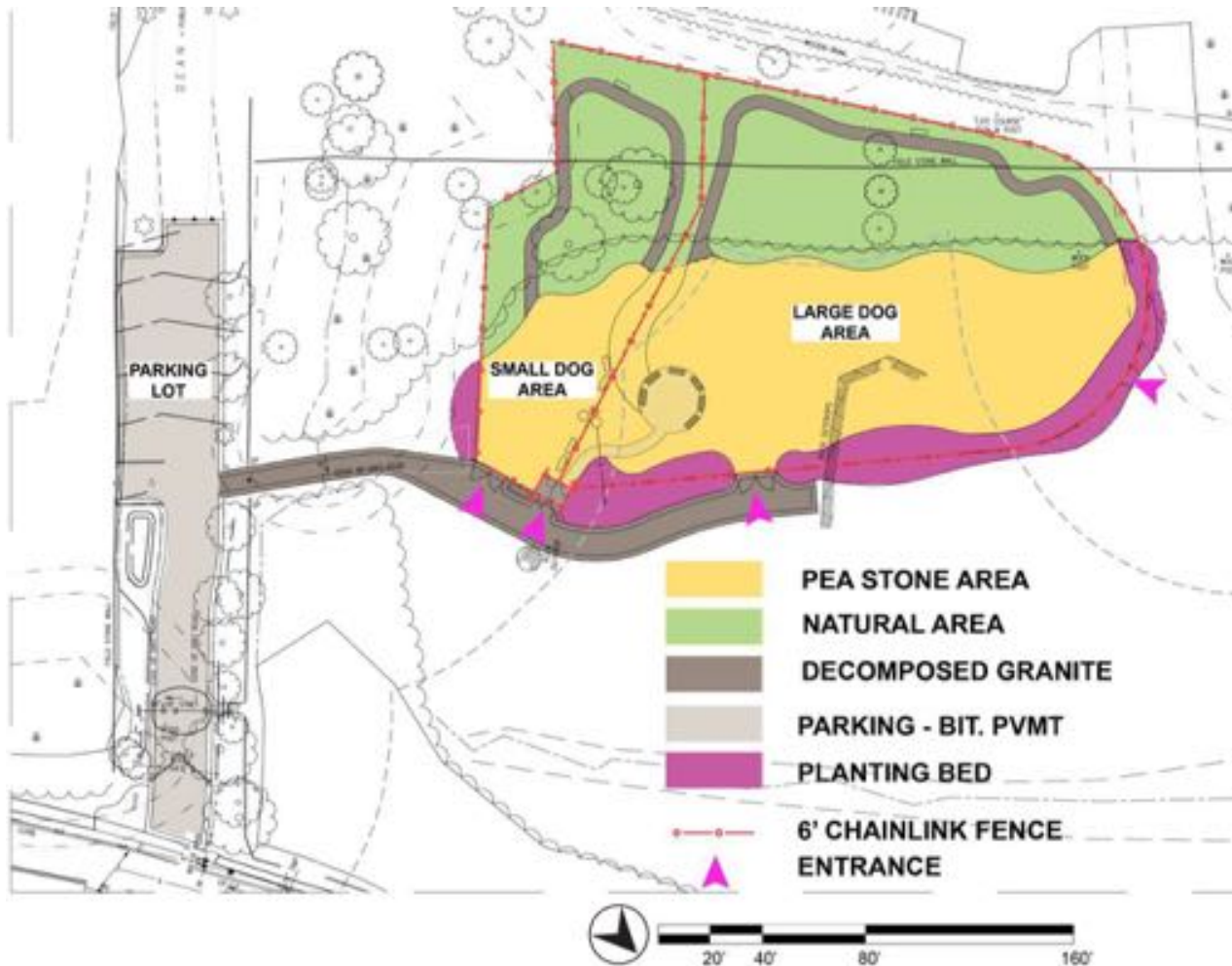


# DANVERS





# DANVERS





# Location Criteria

- **Sufficient size.** – “Too small” is unfair to dogs and unsafe for dogs and people.

Wilmington Dog Park, as a reference: 20,000 ft<sup>2</sup> total,  
with an all-dog area of 13,500 ft<sup>2</sup> and a small dog area of 6,500 ft<sup>2</sup>.

Wakefield Dog Park is 10,000 ft<sup>2</sup>, and seems cramped and unsafe.

- **Safe to use** by owners and their dogs.
- **Safe access** for adults and the young, by car or foot.
- **Convenient access** by car or by foot.
- **Proximity** – As close as possible to the weighted population center of Reading.  
(See map.)
- **Water line** access.
- **Parking** for 10-12 cars within a reasonable distance.



# BIRCH MEADOW DRIVE

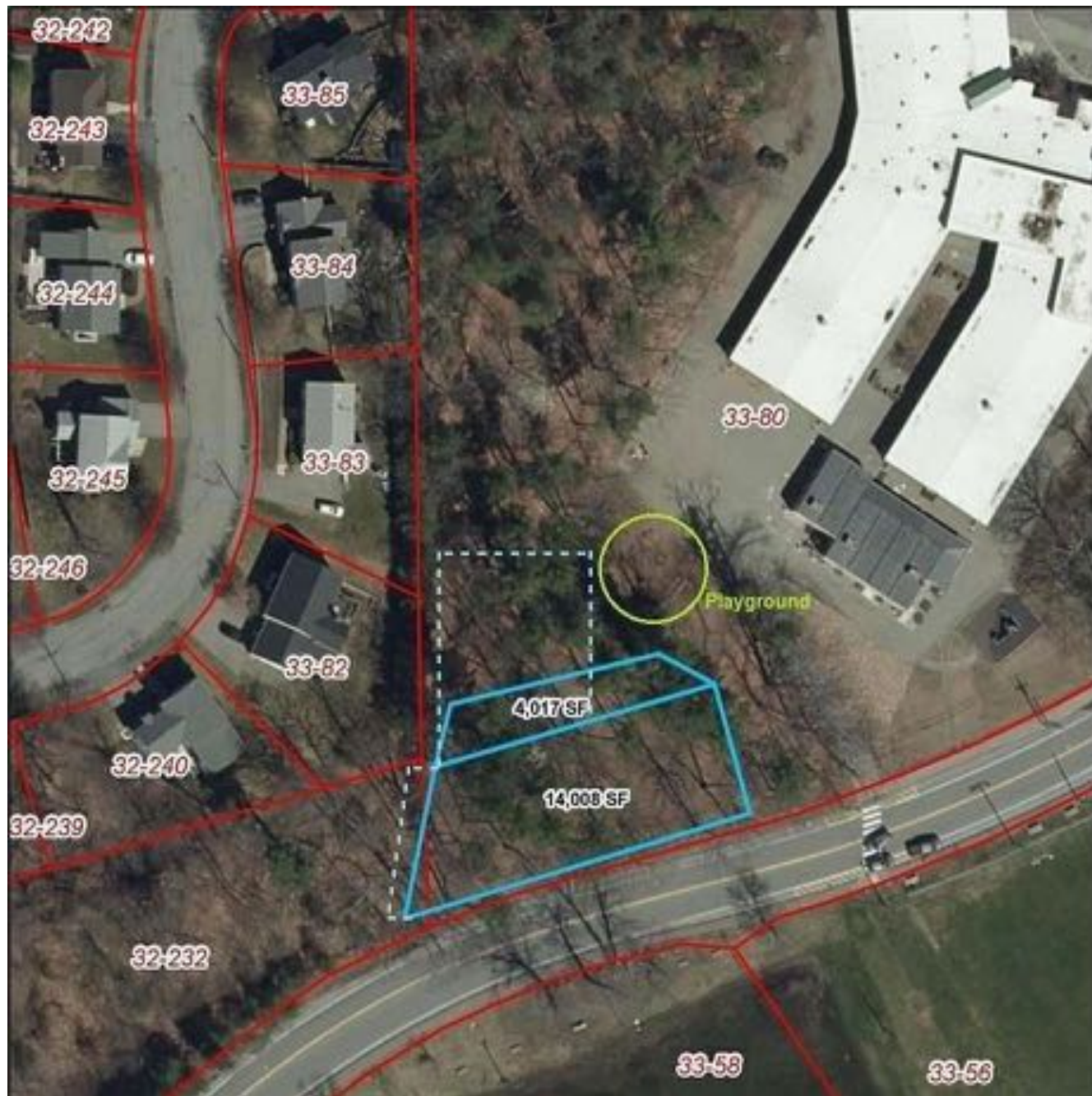




# BIRCH MEADOW DRIVE

Considerable area  
(blue dashed line)  
lies above (north of)  
the 4,017 ft<sup>2</sup> area.

The 14,008 ft<sup>2</sup>  
area could extend  
farther to the left  
(west) (blue  
dashed line).





# BIRCH MEADOW DRIVE





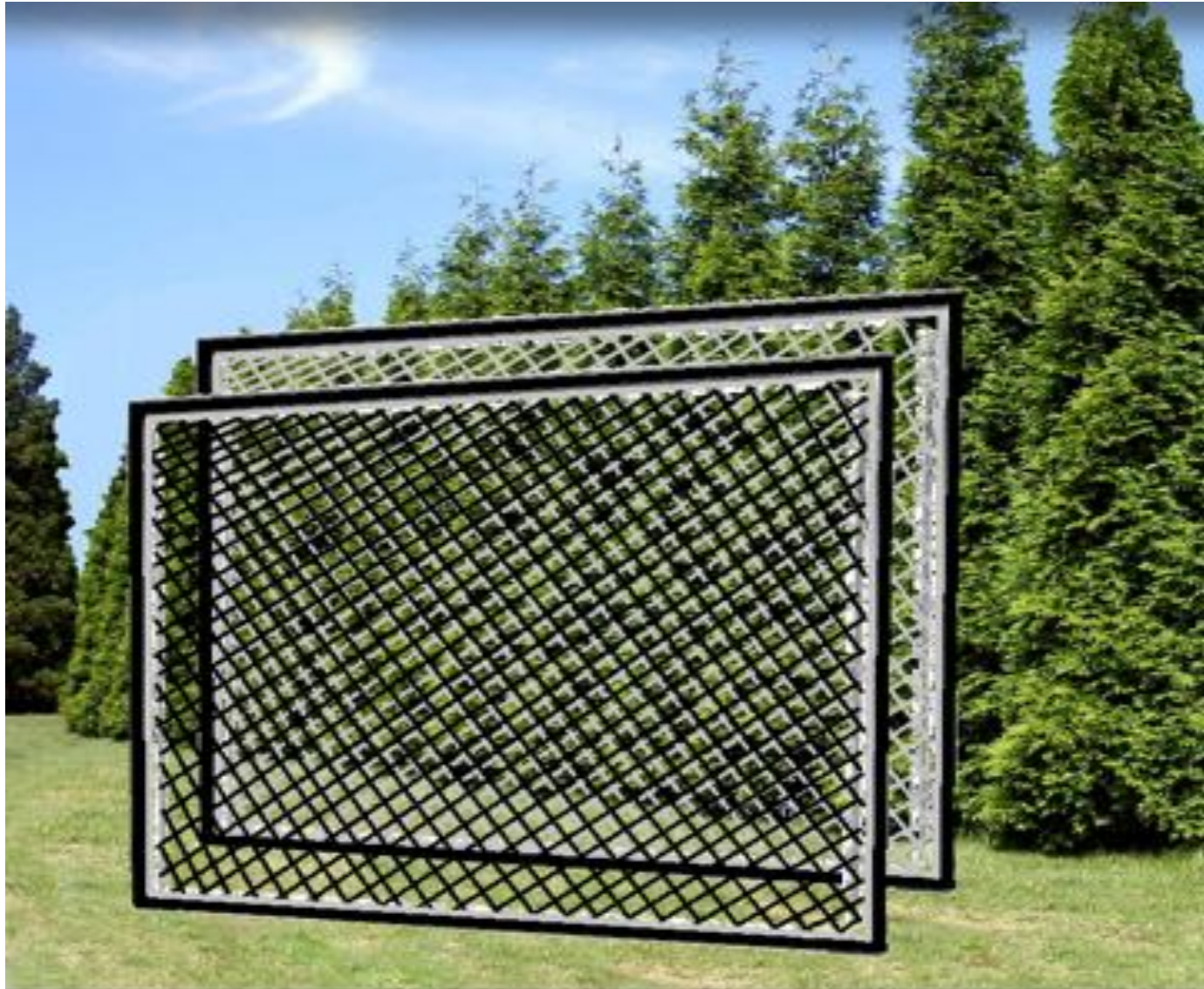
# BIRCH MEADOW DRIVE

## SEPARATING THE DOG PARK AND THE PLAYGROUND

**DOUBLE FENCING**,  
so snouts and little  
fingers never meet.

**PLANTINGS**, such  
as arborvitae, to  
reduce sound,  
visibility and other  
distractions between  
dogs and kids.

**SOLID BARRIER**,  
(optional), such as a  
wooden fence, to  
further reduce  
sound and visibility.





# Management and Support

- Responsibility and general management:  
Reading Recreation Department?
- Major maintenance:  
Reading Department of Public Works (DPW)?
- Minor general maintenance and management (e.g., waste bag supply, safety and rules monitoring), coordination of activities (e.g., events, fall cleanup), signage, fundraising, etc.:  
“Friends of Reading Dog Park”?



# Questions?

