

Ocean Avenue Recreation Area
ASSET INVENTORY AND VISION PLAN
Portland Maine



An Asset Inventory and Vision Plan
For The
Ocean Avenue Recreation Area
Portland, Maine

Final Draft
June 2006

City of Portland
Land Bank Commission
City Hall, 386 Congress Street, Portland, Maine 04101

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There is a place in Portland where you can enjoy a short walk along a gravel way, amongst tall forest trees that closely hug your route. Along the way you can admire some of the natural character that attracts so many to the woods of Maine. You begin to notice a brightness up ahead. It's not too long until you come to something quite astonishing—an great expanse of open sky and green meadow. As you meander around this mound of grasses, you encounter much of the wildlife one might suspect— butterflies, dragonflies, lots of grasshoppers, and many more birds. The sounds are distinctly wild and the common noises of the city street that brought you here are no longer perceptible. You find your way to the top of the meadow and you take note of the full panoramic expanse of sky and woods that define the meadow's edge, unbroken with the exception of where the adjacent gravel pit lies that allows a glimpse of Casco Bay in the distance. Where are we? Some still refer to it as the Old Dump, others call it the Dragon Fields, and the City of Portland has recently named it the Ocean Avenue Recreation Area, which is the subject of this study.

This area is located along the City limits adjacent to the Town of Falmouth. The City of Portland currently owns approximately ninety six acres of contiguous woods and meadow here, of which is most well-known as the former Ocean Avenue City Dump, comprising of 28 acres of the total area. In recent years, however, since the closing of the landfill, the area is more commonly known as a great opportunity for those seeking a natural setting for a wide number of recreational activities. Many of these activities take advantage of the two and a half miles of trails and gravel drives that connect between Ocean Avenue and the North Deering neighborhood of Virginia Street and Maine Avenue. The tax-acquired property in this vicinity (approximately 34 acres of the total area), together with the former landfill and its associated property, allows for the experience of some of the most attractive natural landscape; abound with a variety of wildlife, within the City of Portland.

The Portland Land Bank Commission has previously selected this area as a high priority for preservation as conservation land. In March 2001 in its initial report to the City Council, the Land Bank Commission identified the Virginia Street parcels as a priority for preservation. This interest was in conflict, at the time, with competing interests by the School Department to locate a future school in this vicinity. With the School Department no longer interested and with the increased pressures to develop housing in the City-owned parcels between Maine Avenue and Marlborough Road, the Land Bank thought it prudent to return and assess its original interests in the area.

Because of the potential use of the property for housing, the close proximity of these undeveloped parcels to the City's holdings at the former landfill, and the recent successful opening there of the dog park, the Land Bank Commission sought to initiate a study of the former Ocean Avenue landfill and adjacent areas to determine its recreational potential. The *Asset Inventory and Vision Plan* is the study the Land Bank Commission determined should be completed in order to ascertain what the most appropriate long term use of this area is for recreation and/or conservation.

PURPOSE, GOALS AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to: 1) prepare an asset inventory for the conservation and passive recreation potential of the former Ocean Avenue landfill site and abutting City owned lands and 2) develop a vision for public use on the site. Goals include: influence near-term maintenance and use of the site; provide a forum for the neighborhood and stakeholders to discuss the future potential of the study area as it relates to conservation and recreation; and to establish the basis for future park planning and design. The study makes the first step towards formalizing public use by documenting the site's recreational and conservation potential while providing the opportunity for community and stakeholders' input on the range of possibilities.

The study began with on-site investigations and review of available data from City and State sources. The collected data was then used to prepare a plan of existing conditions. Together with information gathered through several site walks and with available data on the site's history and existing conditions an inventory of assets was identified and analyzed which is described in Section II.

A number of meetings were held with the Project Team who consisted of City staff representing: the City Manager's Office, Parks and Recreation, Public Works and Planning, and members of the Land Bank Commission. Subsequently, a questionnaire to solicit information from the people who visit the site was prepared and sent along with the invitation to the first public meeting. In addition, there were two public forums where the Asset Inventory and Vision Plan was presented and discussed. The first was a well attended Neighborhood Meeting that included a workshop facilitated by Pamela Plumb and Associates, followed by a joint meeting of the Friends of the Park Commission (FPC) and the Land Bank Commission (LBC). The final draft of the study will be provided to the City Council for review and possible further action.

Based on information solicited from the questionnaire and the workshop/public meeting and on the guiding principles and direction from the Project Team and stake holders, a vision for the Study Area was developed. The vision and the prepared plan are described in Section III.

FINDINGS

Asset Inventory

The Study Area includes typical New England landscape types such as mixed hardwood-conifer woods, grass meadows, freshwater wetlands, stream edge and old field. This together with an equally varied topography was identified as core natural and recreational assets that contribute greatly to the overall quality of the property—quality of habitat and quality of scenery.

An Asset Inventory Plan has been prepared that includes and denotes natural features such as: grassland; old field; riparian; woods; stream; and abutting wet areas. The largest

of these areas is the woods which total over 50 acres (the largest contiguous tract of which lies within the tax-acquired property) and the grassland which totals 35 acres. In addition to these features, existing trails and gravel drive, the Quarry Run Dog Park, and abutting private open spaces contribute as assets.

Other important factors identified as significant assets include the scale and location of the study area and as it relates to comparable areas within the City, and the value the site offers to plant and wildlife habitats. The location is significant in that it offers convenient access to residents, and food and shelter to wildlife that is continually being marginalized by the increase of development. The scale offers an area that can accommodate space for a variety of landscape types benefiting scenic and habitat values, and offers an open space that is comparable in size to other locations in the City that is similar in development but is lacking in this northern portion of Portland.

The overall size of the study area is of a shape and contiguous space that would benefit a range of wildlife and plant habitats. With information from the Department of U.S. Fish and Wildlife's Gulf of Maine Program, and local testimony from the birding community, probably due in part to the site's close proximity to the coast and the Presumpscot River, the Study Area offers important habitat for many small woodland and meadow creatures, especially migratory and specialty birds. The grassland found on the former landfill is considered a significant attraction for a variety of sparrows, warblers and as well as raptors in the spring.

Vision Plan

In order to have a genuine vision for these public grounds, the envisioning process must engage the community and stakeholders. Input from these groups, via a questionnaire and workshop-style public meeting, overwhelmingly supported preserving the existing state of the study area; the natural and passive character of the site. With this sentiment three main priorities of a vision emerged: the natural scenery, wildlife and their habitats, and passive use.

With suggestions such as *permanent protection*, and *keep it wild*, that speak to the real allure the site possesses for its visitors, it was evident from the public comments that there is a strong desire to preserve the natural scenery of the site. A sense of remoteness and breadth together with the natural character of the site offers a very unique opportunity— a 30 acre meadow bounded by 50 acres of woods may be common place in Maine, but is a rare find within the limits of a fairly densely developed city like Portland.

Another priority that was articulated from public input is that the wildlife and their habitats warrant preserving. The birding community has long identified the former landfill, also know as the Dragon Fields, as an attractive location for a wide variety of sparrows, warblers and other specialty birds year round. This is in part due to the food and shelter the meadow offers and its large scale makes it an obvious stop for migratory birds. Specific and consistent maintenance will be required to realize the benefits of conservation in the Study Area. One example is the need to mow the grasslands late in

the season, preferably in November, to ensure optimal condition for the migratory birds that rely on the seed and cover that exists.

The third priority that emerged was low-impact and passive activities should be encouraged and provided for. Higher impact and formalized activities, such as ball playing, ATV and snowmobile use received the lowest scores on the questionnaires when asked about future activities for the study area. Trails were expressed as important features in any future plans and should be constructed to be dry routes which are well marked.

A Vision Plan was prepared based upon the sentiment of conservation and passive recreation expressed in the questionnaires received and in the workshop styled public meeting. The plan recommends that the natural features found on the site and identified by the Asset Inventory are preserved and enhanced. These features include: grasslands, woods, riparian/stream, and old-field, It also identifies opportunities for new trails, gravel walk improvements and areas for possible community gardens and additional parking.

The Vision

The vision for public lands that comprise the Ocean Avenue Recreation Area is one of conservation and passive recreation. The property includes the tax-acquired parcels in the vicinity of Virginia Street between Maine Avenue and Marlborough Road and the grounds that include the former landfill and the Quarry Run Dog Park along Ocean Avenue.

The vision celebrates the *genius of the place*, embracing the preservation and enhancement of those core assets that set this landscape apart from other places, while offering the opportunity for recreational activities that are low in impact. These activities are essentially passive and are compatible to: the conservation of plants and wildlife; the preservation of the natural scenery; and maintaining the integrity of the landfill's cap.

Last but not least, the Ocean Avenue Recreation Area will be a public landscape that is welcoming and safe. This will be accomplished, where possible, with accessible routes that accommodate a wide range of abilities and through secure trail heads and parking areas. This and other safeguards will go far in supporting an enjoyable experience to this *urban wild land* that exists here in Portland.

CONCLUSION

The Study Area currently offers convenient and quality passive recreational value to adjacent communities. A great amount of wildlife, especially song birds, thrives on the abundant food and cover that the Study Area provides in the midst of Maine's most developed city. A *Ocean Avenue Recreation Area* that consists of all the publicly owned lands within the Study Area would be a great asset to today's Portlanders, (North Deering, East Deering and from the City at large) providing an accessible respite to engage nature, but would also demonstrate significant foresight; aiding the quality of life for the surrounding communities during the evitable increases in development.

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SECTION 1 - Foreword

OVERVIEW

The City of Portland currently owns approximately ninety six acres of contiguous woods and meadow along the City limits adjacent to the Town of Falmouth. Most well-known within this swath of land is the former Ocean Avenue City Dump. In recent years, however, since the closing of the landfill, the area is more commonly known as a great opportunity for those seeking a natural setting for a wide number of recreational activities. Many of these activities take advantage of the two and a half miles of trails/gravel drive that connect between Ocean Avenue and the North Deering neighborhood of Virginia Street and Maine Avenue. The tax-acquired property in this vicinity, together with the former landfill and its associated property, allows for the experience of some of the most attractive natural landscape, abound with a variety of wildlife, within City of Portland.

The Portland Land Bank Commission has previously selected this area as a high priority for preservation as conservation land. In March 2001 in its initial report to the City Council, the Land Bank Commission identified the Virginia Street parcels as a priority for preservation. This interest was in conflict, at the time, with competing interests by the School Department to locate a future school in this vicinity. With School Department no longer interested and with the increased pressures to develop housing in the City-owned parcels between Maine Avenue and Marlborough Road, the Land Bank thought it prudent to return and assess its original interests in the area.

Because of the potential use of the property for housing, the close proximity of these undeveloped parcels to the City's holdings at the former landfill, and the recent successful opening there of the dog park, the Land Bank Commission initiated a study of the former Ocean Avenue landfill and adjacent areas to determine its recreational potential. The Land Bank Commission determined that a vision plan should be completed in order to ascertain what the most appropriate long term use of this area is for recreation and/or conservation.

PURPOSE AND GOALS

The purpose of this study is to: 1) prepare an asset inventory for the conservation and passive recreation potential of the former Ocean Avenue landfill site and abutting City owned lands and 2) develop a vision for public use on the site. The report also documents and evaluates the current site conditions through available and published information and ascertains the parameters for site development as it might relate to conservation and passive recreation.

General goals include: influence near-term maintenance and use of the site; provide a forum for the neighborhood and stakeholders to discuss the future potential of the study area as it relates to conservation and recreation; and establish the basis for future park planning and design. The study makes the first step towards formalizing public use by documenting the site's recreational

and conservation potential while providing the opportunity for community and stakeholders' input on the range of possibilities.

METHODOLOGY

The study began with on-site investigations and review of available data from City and State sources. The collected data was then used to prepare a plan of existing conditions. A list of available data is located in Appendix B. Together with information gathered through several site walks and with available data on the site's history and existing conditions an inventory of assets was identified and analyzed which is described in Section II.

A number of meetings were held with the Project Team who consisted of City staff representing: the City Manager's Office, Parks and Recreation, Public Works and Planning, and members of the Land Bank Commission. In addition, there were two public forums where the Asset Inventory and Vision Plan was presented and discussed. The first was a well attended Neighborhood Meeting that included a workshop facilitated by Pamela Plumb and Associates, followed by a joint meeting of the Friends of the Park Commission (FPC) and the Land Bank Commission (LBC). The final draft will be provided to the City Council for review and possible further action.

Based on information solicited from the questionnaire and the workshop/public meeting and on the guiding principles and direction from the Project Team, a vision for the Study Area was developed. The vision and the prepared plan are described in Section III.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The guiding principles were initially established by the Ocean Avenue Landfill Master Planning Committee that was formed in 2003. Subsequently, the City's Project Team for the Asset Inventory & Vision plan has worked to update the guiding principles.

- 1) Protect the open space values of the site
- 2) Maintain and enhance the natural integrity of the site
- 3) Adhere to all Regulatory Requirements of the Closure Agreement with MDEP
- 4) Allow for multi-purpose uses that do not conflict with the first 3 guiding principles
- 5) Promote trail connections
- 6) Provide for public access
- 7) Protect environmental quality

8) Develop educational opportunities

STAKEHOLDERS

The stakeholders list was initially established by the Ocean Avenue Landfill Master Planning Committee that was formed in 2003. The list served as the basis for distributing the questionnaire and notice for neighborhood meeting. The following stakeholders list has been revised by the City's Project Team for the Asset Inventory & Vision plan.

- District Councilor, City Council
- Department of Public Works
- Department of Parks & Recreation
- Division of Planning
- Land Bank Commission
- Friends of the Park Commission
- Portland Trails
- POOCH
- Maine Audubon
- Maine Department of Environmental Protection (Landfill Closure (Ted Wolf)/ Erosion & Sediment Control & Other Permitting
- Maine Dept of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (Lois Winter)
- East Deering Neighborhood Association (Brenda Didonato)
- North Deering Neighborhood Association (Mike Pizzo)
- Abutting subdivision associations (Summer Place, Pheasant Hill, Ledgewood, Copley Woods, Alden's Walk Condominiums)
- Abutting Falmouth Neighborhood Association (Pleasant Hill)
- CMP – Recreational easements
- Portland Water District – Recreational easements
- Dragon Products (Dave Grinnell)
- Delicata Property (Diane Doyle)
- Athletic Field proponents (Athletic Leagues)
- All Speed Bicycles
- School Department
- Sam Merrill; Muskie School

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND VISIONING PROCESS

The ability to balance competing needs and interests for rehabilitating and developing the Ocean Avenue Recreation Area is of paramount importance. What is needed, in part, to ensure this balance, is the availability of information—specifically information from the people who currently use and will ultimately use these public lands. In addition to the end user, those organizations that are stewards of such landscapes offer much needed thoughts and guidance. The reciprocal is equally important, that a forum is necessary to provide people the opportunity to receive information about the proposed development— information that they may have not had the occasion to have.

User Questionnaire

Obtaining information from a wide variety of people, who presumably will have a stake in the success of any future plans, is imperative to a fair and open public process. In the same way that the physical design and engineering proposed for park improvements would be useless if the initial base survey information was flawed, so would all the decisions made on recreational activities, proposed facilities and park management be ineffective if the information was not reflective of the majority of those using the park.

Therefore, we developed a questionnaire that was administered by the City to acquire such information. A copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix D along with the findings and summary of the results.

Public Meetings

Three public forums were planned to solicit information and engage Portland residents and stakeholders. The first opportunity was a workshop-style neighborhood meeting with a purpose of:

- Outlining the project
- Report on the asset inventory information gathered to date
- List of all the ideas for the future generated by the attendees
- Obtain a sense of the group's highest priorities for the future uses of the site.

Information gathered at this meeting together with Questionnaire results is the basis of the vision plan. A preliminary draft of the Asset Inventory and Vision Plan was presented to a joint public meeting of FPC and LBC on April 6, 2006. The final draft will be provided to the City Council for their review and subsequent action that may offer a third opportunity for public input through a Council Workshop.

SECTION II - Asset Inventory and Analysis

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND HISTORY OF THE SITE

With review of historic USGS maps from 1891, 1916, and 1957 and deed maps, the land before becoming the City's landfill was essentially a low lying area located between two highlands; Graves Hill to the south and the high grounds over the City line in Falmouth, southeast of Presumpscot Falls.

The Study Area, as shown on the Existing Conditions Plan in Appendix A, includes City owned property associated with the landfill and tax acquired property that is in the vicinity of Virginia Street, totaling approximately 96 acres. The City owned property associated with the former landfill includes the recent Quarry Run Dog Park, the former landfill itself and the remaining area in between, totaling approximately 58 acres.

This 58-acre tract includes 33 acres of fields and meadows and 25 acres of wood. A brook and wetlands are included along the north and west boundaries, and some wetlands located within the bounds of the recent dog park. In addition to the two artificially made mounds, the smaller one being within the dog park and the larger one being the landfill proper, there exist ledge and rock outcroppings in various places. The large landfill mound is enclosed entirely by a gravel drive. The mound is as high as 50' to 70' above the gravel drive to the north and west, and is as little as 20' higher in the south. Slopes are generally between 15 and 25 percent, with some areas as steep as 30 percent.

The tax acquired lands, including the associated paper streets, amount to approximately 34 acres which is primarily wooded with some wetland/old field areas. This area is transected by Portland Water District property where a water main is located. The topography is varied creating different plant and wildlife habitat opportunities. Unlike the former landfill property, the tax acquired property abuts to several homes and borders the Virginia Street, Ray Street, and Huntington Avenue Neighborhoods. A CMP easement is located to the rear of the former landfill running parallel to the Whitcomb Avenue paper street.

There are a number of existing trails that meander throughout the Study Area, the main ones being located along the PWD property, CMP easement, and paper streets Kentucky Avenue, Pine Grove Avenue and Montana Street

The area is home to and visited by a great deal of birds. The Maine Birding Trail website includes the area as an important spot. The large amount of seed and cover provided by the Meadow/landfill combined with being surrounded by urban development, offers an attractive and healthy habitat for birds, specifically song sparrows, and a host of other wildlife. Wild turkeys, fox, deer, hawks and a wide variety of song birds are some examples that were mentioned at the neighborhood meeting.

INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

The core assets of the land within the Study Area include typical New England landscape types such as mixed hardwood-conifer woods, grass meadows, freshwater wetlands, stream edge and old field. The equally varied topography is also part of the core natural and recreational assets that contribute greatly to the overall quality of the property—quality of habitat and quality of scenery.

An Asset Inventory Plan has been prepared and included in Appendix A. It denotes natural features that include: grassland; old field; riparian; woods; stream; and abutting wet areas. The largest of these areas is the woods which total over 50 acres and the grassland which totals 35 acres. In addition to these features, existing trails and gravel drive, the Quarry Run Dog Park, and abutting private open spaces are included as assets. All information shown on the prepared plan is in the context of the City's parcel mapping.

The existing gravel drive/walk that encircles the landfill and connects to Ocean Avenue is in fair to poor condition in some areas; however, its one and half mile extent offers a great benefit for current and continued access to the Study Area. In the same way, the little more than a mile of existing trails located on the tax-acquired property is an asset enabling the public to experience the scenic and recreational value of the land. These trails also provide access from the surrounding neighborhood to the large grasslands of the former landfill and the Quarry Run Dog Park. The Virginia Street/Maine Avenue neighborhood also offers a METRO bus stop that can be considered as an asset providing mass transit to the Study Area.

Unique Aspects

Assets that help to distinguish the Study Area as significantly unique include: scale and location. It is rare to find such a wide range of landscape scenery/habitat available in a single property. When combined with the fact that this property abuts a great deal of residential development with capacity for future growth to the southeast, the Study Area offers an exceptional opportunity for recreation and nature conservation. In addition, the long distant views from the top of the landfill, views of Casco Bay in some areas, as well as the magnitude of open sky available to the visitor, adds to the uniqueness of the place. The location is significant in that it offers convenient access to residents, and food and shelter to wildlife, that is continually being marginalized by the increase of development.

The recent site improvements connected with the Quarry Run Dog Park can also be included among the assets of the Study Area. The benefit can be attributed to both the establishment of regular recreational visitors to the site as well as to the new infrastructure that includes parking and paved entrance drive.

City-wide Context

A Location Map was prepared and is included in Appendix A of this report. The Location Plan shows the Study Area in the context of the entire City and other public landscapes. The map demonstrates that there are no other similar size properties in the North and East Deering neighborhoods that are available to the public with the exception of Payson Park which lies within the Ocean Avenue neighborhood. Another observation is that the southern, more densely populated portion of the City is home to larger and even a higher number of open space areas. Riverside Golf Course is the largest open space area in the northern portion of the City; however, informal access is only during the winter in the off-season. With the northern portion of the City likely to receive a great deal more development in the foreseeable future, it seems to make sense to preserve larger tracts of land for public open space. This would offer in the future the inevitably more populated neighborhoods in this portion of the City access to open space of a scale that can support such density. This is something that the southern half of the City already enjoys. In addition, when considering the amount of area that is within a 10 to 15 minute walk of public open space (approximately one-third to one-half mile distance), the southern half of the City offers many more closer opportunities to public open space than to the north.

Conservation Aspects

The old adage that big is not always better is actually wrong when it comes to successful and healthy natural habitats. Scientists have long documented that the majority of our native plants and wildlife require more, not less land to survive. In addition to the quantity, the quality of the land is important. Terms such as *fragmentation* and *edge habitat* are used to describe environmental deficits of the land with regard to its habitat value. As a result of development (roads, homes, utilities, etc...) the land is fragmented into smaller and smaller areas. Habitats along the periphery of these areas, because of the proximity of development, support a less diverse wildlife and many plants are typically hardy invasive weed species that threaten intact habitats and aggravate our gardens at home. These edge habitats can range between 650 to 2000 feet.

Though the Study Area on a whole is not likely to have habitat that will support a very diverse amount of wildlife, the grassland found on the former landfill, however, has proved to be fairly significant with regard to migratory birds. The woods that abut the grassland habitat provide a beneficial buffer from the surrounding development. Copley Woods and Ocean Ridge neighborhoods in Portland and development along Ledgewood and Charlotte drives in Falmouth have encroached into these woods and compromised the buffer around the grassland habitat. Maintaining the woods to the east (north of the Dragon Concrete) and west (the tax-acquired property) is important with regard to this respect.

Based on the proximity to existing neighborhoods and lack of public open space in this portion of the City, the Study Area offers valuable opportunity for passive recreation. In light of the attached habitat information from the Department of U.S. Fish and Wildlife's Gulf of Maine Program, and local testimony from the birding community, and the close proximity to the coast and the Presumpscot River, the Study Area offers important habitat for migratory birds, especially the grassland found on the former landfill which has been identified as significant.

SECTION III - Vision Plan

THE VISION

WHAT DO PEOPLE WANT?

Plans based on under-represented information will not have the support of the community. Without such support, efforts will be unsuccessful and opportunities will be lost. In order to have a genuine vision for these public grounds, the envisioning process must engage the community and stakeholders. As an effort to provide this important initial information, crucial to a vision plan, public input was solicited from two venues via a questionnaire and workshop-style public meeting. Interests expressed by participants at these forums can be categorized by three main aspirations for the Study Area:

The Natural Character of the Site as Special

The majority of participants expressed the general desire to preserve the natural character of the site. Suggestions such as *permanent protection*, and *keep it wild* speak to the real allure the site possesses and the high value it has for its visitors. It is likely that this natural appeal is amplified due to the close proximity of the Study Area to densely developed areas. A 30 acre meadow bounded by 50 acres of woods is not unique in Maine, but is a rare find within the limits of a fairly developed City like Portland.

Other aspects that probably contribute to uniqueness of the Study Area is its remote location—comparably scaled public landscapes are one to two miles away, and the variety of landscape features within one place—fields, woods, streams, and marsh found among a varying topography contributes to a uniquely varied landscape. The landscapes of Pine Grove Park, Payson Park, Baxter Woods, Evergreen Cemetery, Riverton Trolley Park and Riverside Golf Course all have their special qualities, but none have the same combination of landscape features as the Study Area exhibits.

The Wildlife and their Habitats Warrant Preserving

It was expressed at the public meeting and in the questionnaires and is evident from the birding community that the former landfill, also know as the Dragon Fields, is an attractive location for sparrows and specialty birds year round. This is in part due to the food and shelter the meadow offers and its large scale makes it an obvious stop for migratory birds. The varied topography that has been mentioned, contributing to aesthetic quality, also contributes to the variety of habitat. This variety and subtlety in the lay of the land can offer different habitats such as freshwater marsh, vernal pools, grasslands, etc. contributing greatly to the diversity of wildlife.

Specific and consistent maintenance will be required to realize the benefits of conservation in the Study Area. One example is the need to mow the grasslands late in the season, preferably in November, to ensure optimal condition for the migratory birds that rely on the seed and cover

that exists. Other needs would probably be identified as specific environmental assessments are prepared.

The Use should be Passive

It is apparent from the solicited information gathered from the questionnaires and the first public meeting that the type of use that was favored most for the Study Area is passive—low impact activities such as nature walks, which was among the highest scored for future activities. Higher impact and formalized activities, such as ball playing and ATV use and Snowmobile use received the lowest scores of future activities.

Discussions at the first public meeting further defined the interest in trails to be clearly marked and passable without getting wet. Though both paved-multipurpose and less formal hiking-type trails received interest, the extent of one over the other was not clarified. Desire to have the trails mapped and maintained was expressed and the general feeling that trails are in need of enhancement was evident from the participants.

Other Areas of Interest

Access was discussed as several different aspects: ADA accessibility in some areas; limited access for particular uses; access to other trails and neighborhoods; and maintain the current access for dog walking. Limited access included controlling the prohibited uses such as ATV, snowmobile, hunting/firearms. Demarcation of the limits of the public grounds was expressed to limit trespassing on to private property and residential backyards.

Views were identified as being important and a tower to enhance viewing was suggested. Though the idea did not receive significant support one way or the other, it was clearly different than the response solicited from the questionnaire. Perhaps the term *View Platform* evokes a different image than *tower*.

At the public meeting, there were comments and discussions surrounding the notion of housing on the publicly owned land (tax acquired property) in the vicinity of Virginia Street, west of the former landfill. Though ideas of dense, workforce-type and/or cluster-type housing that considered the open space/conservation opportunities of the area was described, there was no real support evident from the participants. An important aspect of the Study Area, and for any successful conservation area, is scale and diversity. The tax-acquired property, presumably where new housing would be planned, amounts to 35% of the total Study Area. It also includes Old Field and contributes 55% of the total woods within the Study Area. The loss of this property from the Study Area will diminish the overall conservation and recreational value, to what extent, however, is unknown and is outside the scope of this study.

A summary of the public meetings notes and findings is presented in Appendix C. For more detail on the different activities that were discussed and rated in the questionnaire, a summary of the findings is available in Appendix D of this report.

The Vision

The vision for public lands that comprise the Ocean Avenue Recreation Area is one of conservation and passive recreation. The property includes the tax-acquired parcels in the vicinity of Virginia Street between Maine Avenue and Marlborough Road and the grounds that include the former landfill and the Quarry Run Dog Park along Ocean Avenue.

The vision celebrates the *genius of the place*, embracing the preservation and enhancement of those core assets that set this landscape apart from other places, while offering the opportunity for recreational activities that are low in impact. These activities are essentially passive and are compatible to: the conservation of plants and wildlife; the preservation of the natural scenery; and maintaining the integrity of the landfill's cap.

Last but not least, the Ocean Avenue Recreation Area will be a public landscape that is welcoming and safe, offering accessible routes, where possible, allowing people with a wide range of abilities, through secure trail heads and parking areas to enjoy this *urban wild land* that exists here in Portland.

THE PLAN

The Vision Plan prepared for the Study Area is based upon the sentiment of conservation and passive recreation expressed in the questionnaires received and in the workshop styled public meeting. The Vision Plan is not a Master Plan in that it does not provide for a level of detail that would directly give rise to specific action and/or development. The proposed trail, for example, that is denoted on the Vision Plan allows to imagine conceptually the location of a new trail and how it might relate to the context of the site, however, it does not allow for a level of insight required to know what materials and resources would be necessary to actually construct it on site.

The following is a brief summary of the features that make up the Vision Plan and potential needs. One proposed management undertaking that should be applied to all natural areas is the curtailing of exotic invasive plants. This measure would need a level of detail that would likely come from subsequent planning and design, but is crucial for the preservation of the existing natural features, as well as the enhancement of them, and safeguarding the scenic value that stems from the natural character of the Study Area.

Plan Features

Grasslands: These are those areas that currently include grasses in an upland meadow type habitat and that is being maintained through annual mowing. Grassed meadow that exists within the former landfill area is by far the location on site where this feature is most prevalent. As it was identified at the workshop, mowing this area must be done as late in the season as possible in order to make available to the plethora of birds the food and cover the grasses provide.

Woods/Tree Cover: Beyond the preservation of the existing extent of woods, there are not many opportunities for additional tree cover. The limited possibilities for more tree planting are in those areas that abut existing development where buffers may be required to separate use and screen views. In addition to a mitigating need, strategic placement of new trees and vegetation may be warranted for aesthetic reasons. In both cases, these efforts would require a further level of detail that will most likely come from a subsequent master/treatment plan.

Riparian and Stream: With the exception of the small wetland within the confines of the Quarry Run Dog Park, the riparian and stream area seems to be the low lying area between the landfill and the tax acquired parcels. From the aerial and site reconnaissance it appears this corridor originates just below the rocky promontory within the CMP easement to the south, extends north then splitting to the abutting wet areas northwest and through the northern swath of perimeter woods towards the north east in Falmouth.

Old Field: As name implies, this landscape feature is a meadow/field in transition. After an assessment identified this area as such, a specific management plan would be required to maintain the area as an old field. This is because it is a transitional habitat that will succeed to woods and forest if left alone. This area, located at the west end of the Study Area in the vicinity of Maine Avenue and Virginia Street, will require a mowing regimen different than what is anticipated for on top of the landfill. Along with the grasses, an old field has woody shrub seedlings and tree saplings as part of the plant community, making it a diverse habitat attractive to much wildlife as well as offering a unique scenic quality.

Gravel Drive/Walk: The existing gravel route currently offers fair to good access for the short term throughout the former landfill area and its associated grounds, and is only in need of safer passage in a few limited areas. An accessible way, such as what exists (with some minor improvements), is required for maintenance vehicles and, with increased use, emergency vehicles as well. There are two possible extensions to the existing layout (as shown on the Vision Plan in Appendix A): a connection between the entrance drive and that portion of the gravel drive/walk located to the south side of the dog park; and the extension of the existing route that provides access to the top of the landfill down the slope to the other side, towards the tax acquired property. In addition to these extensions, consideration should be made for a new gravel drive/walk that connects the existing layout to the tax acquired property, perhaps in the vicinity of Ray Street and the paper Belfast Street, or/and at the terminus of Virginia Street. These possible connections would probably offer the required access for maintenance and emergency vehicles.

New Trail: As shown on the Vision Plan, the new trail is proposed as a loop within generally the center of the tax acquired property. The layout offers a degree of separation from the existing development, and would maintain an elevation keeping it as dry as possible. Due to the lay of the land, however, two or three structures are anticipated to ensure a dry route. It is proposed that the described circuit would have connections to Virginia Street, Ray Street, Marlborough Road, Trapelo Street, and the existing gravel drive/walk at the base of the former landfill. There may be other trail opportunities that may have limited connection possibility, though could offer

different experiences; the riparian-stream corridor and the rocky promontory within the CMP easement are two prospects.

Parking: There are two possibilities to increase the current capacity of the existing parking area located north of the Quarry Run Dog Park. One opportunity is to expand the current parking area, perhaps making it double loaded if the space allows, and/or adding stalls off the entrance drive closer to Ocean Avenue. Another opportunity is to provide additional parking to a new area, possibly in the vicinity of Ray and Belfast Street. Here, access to existing and proposed trails would be available and formalizing an entry on this side of park would be beneficial. One more possibility for parking might be through creating a temporary/grassed parking area that is used for special events. An area that could be considered is a portion of the small meadow that is east of the landfill just on the other side of the gravel drive.

Look-Out Tower/Kiosk: While there seems to be consensus on the quality of the views the Study Area affords, support for a structure to enhance these views is not as clear. This could be due to the ambiguity of the term used in the questionnaire to describe this area, not providing a comfortable understanding of what a 'View Platform' would be. The site, however, offers a unique opportunity to offer a considerably greater view with reasonable effort. Perhaps such a structure can also serve as a kiosk as well, an idea that came from the workshop discussions. The concept probably warrants further consideration in subsequent planning and design, and with that a possible location if such a structure is proposed. Assuming that designing such a structure to work on the actual landfill would not be prudent, though it could very well be feasible, the high area adjacent to the landfill in the vicinity of the quarry seems to be suitable for a look-out which is approximately 6 feet lower than the top of the landfill.

Proposed Program

Any future policy enacted for the Study Area should support the vision of conservation and passive recreation. Under some of the Plan Features outlined above, several policy/program oriented vision components were described. Some components were not described as part of a specific feature, however, should be considered when developing a policy for the Study Area. These factors are described earlier in this section, under *What do People Want?*

SECTION IV – Findings and Recommendations for Subsequent Planning

FINDINGS

As outlined in previous sections, the Study Area has been found to be more than appropriate for use as a public open space with conservation and passive recreation as objectives. The report provides many specific examples that support this view. The general basis for this finding is supported by three factors: the location and contiguous size of the Study Area, and that the land is owned by the public.

The location offers advantages to both residents and wildlife. For the residents, it presents close access to public open space, a 15 to 20 minute walk, which is not necessarily common in this half of the City. It provides wildlife, especially birds, a refuge among one of Maine's largest cities. This is due in part to its close proximity to the coast and the Presumpscot River, important natural features to traveling migratory birds. The size and contiguous makeup of the Study Area provides better opportunities for healthier habitats, increasing vitality of native plants and wildlife. The size and shape also contributes greatly to the varied scenery that is apparent within the Study Area. The scale and contiguous nature is of a breadth that it includes a wide variety of land cover types and change in topography, making for an appealing experience.

In addition, a public open space this size will support passive recreational needs far into the future and will be able to accommodate the inevitable growth in development in this portion of the City. Public open space is more likely to come from city government than from the private institutions, where as the reverse is true for residential development. It is important for the City to consider this and other advantages previously outlined when reflecting on uses other than recreation and conservation uses.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The scope of this report is limited in that additional information is likely necessary to determine site specific design aspects of the final site plan and to draft specific natural resource and park management policies that can be successfully implemented. Additional information needed includes: a plant and wildlife habitat assessment; wetland delineation (tax-acquired property was recently delineated); a landscape management report; and a boundary survey of all City owned parcels.

Next Steps

Master Plan

Prepare Master Plan with the goal of having it adopted as part of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The main objectives would be to: develop a park plan that is specific to the site; determine the extent of improvement costs and permitting required; draft a park management policy that addresses the public use and habitat conservation and enhancement; and continue public review and input on the project.

Ensure Open Space Protection

It was clear from the public process that the Study Area warranted safeguards to preserve its natural character and public access. The City owned property should be rezoned to Recreation Open Space (ROS) with provisions to ensure conservation and passive recreation use.

Formalize Easements with Dragon Concrete for the access along the existing gravel drive south of the Quarry Run Dog Park, also known as the old dump road.. Portland Water District also owns land within the Study Area. Initiate discussions with abutting property owners on possible recreation/conservation easement opportunities.

Communication

Initiate discussions with the Town of Falmouth regarding possible opportunities and concerns that may be related to the Ocean Avenue Recreation Area. Also, establish a core of residents and stakeholders that can champion the project and offer a public face for the vision represented in this report.

**Appendix A
Plans**

Location Plan

Current USGS Plan

Historic USGS Plan-1891

Historic USGS Plan-1916

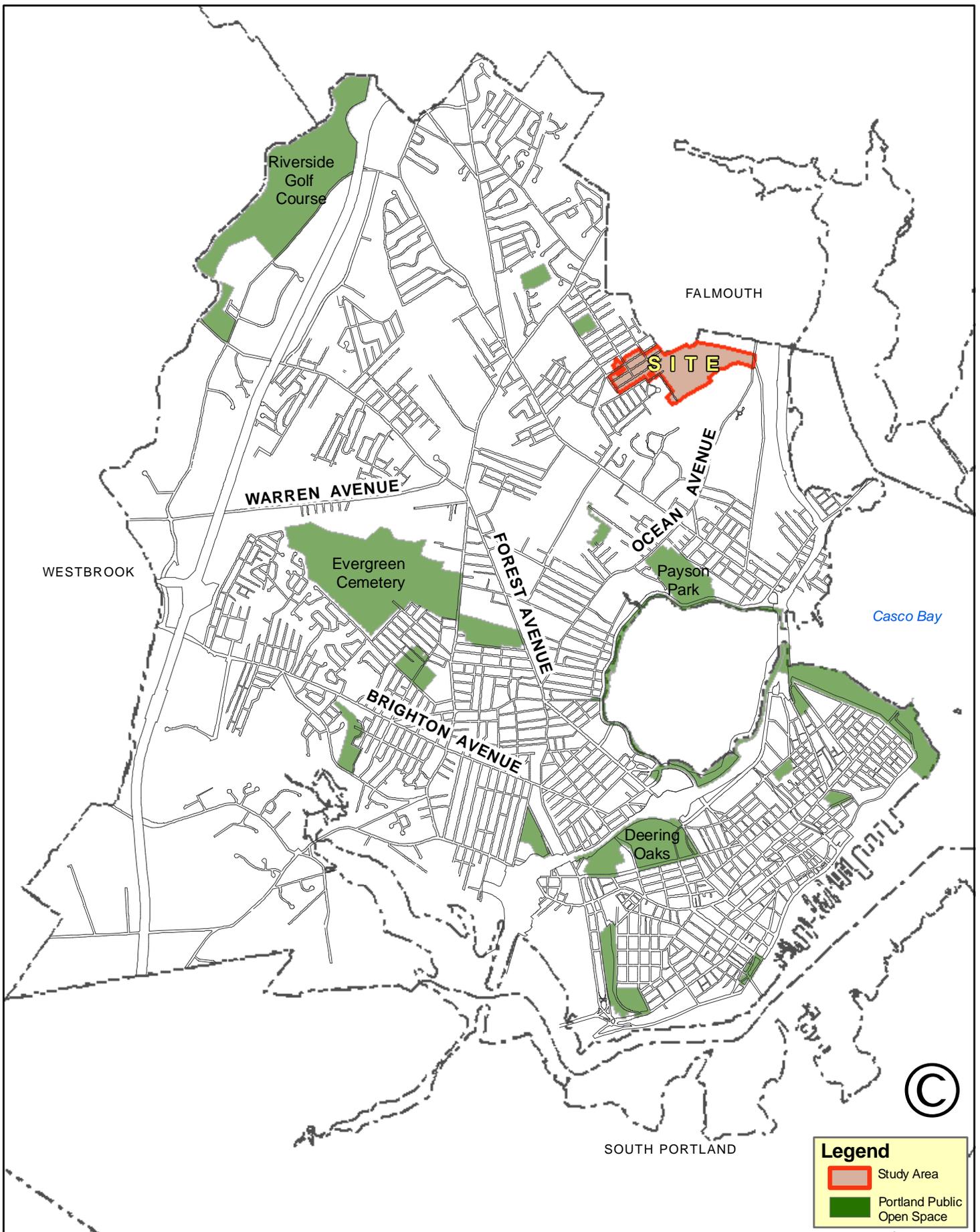
Historic USGS Plan-1957

Aerial Plan

Existing Conditions Plan

Asset Inventory Plan

Vision Plan

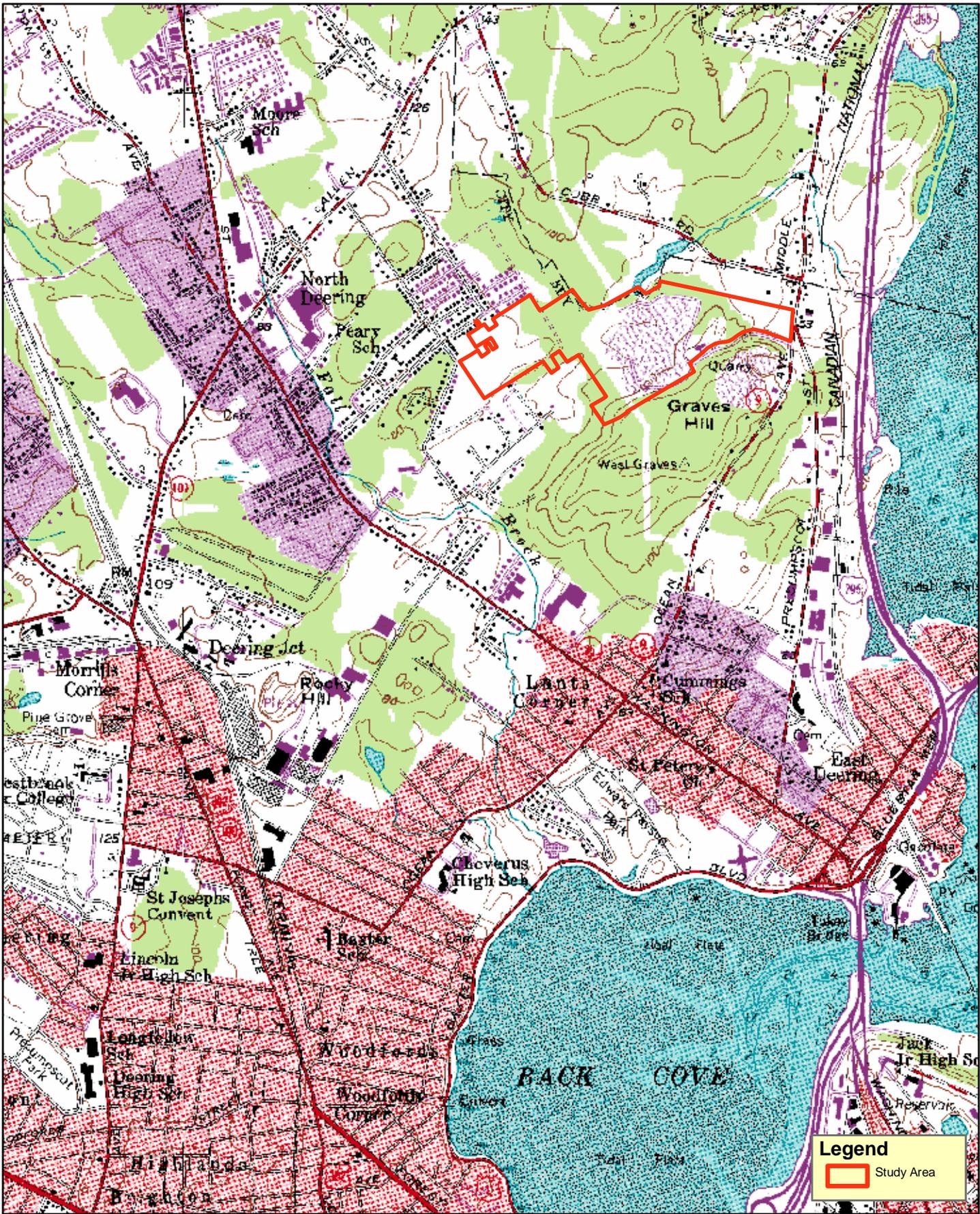


Location Plan

OCEAN AVENUE RECREATION AREA

Asset Inventory And Vision Plan

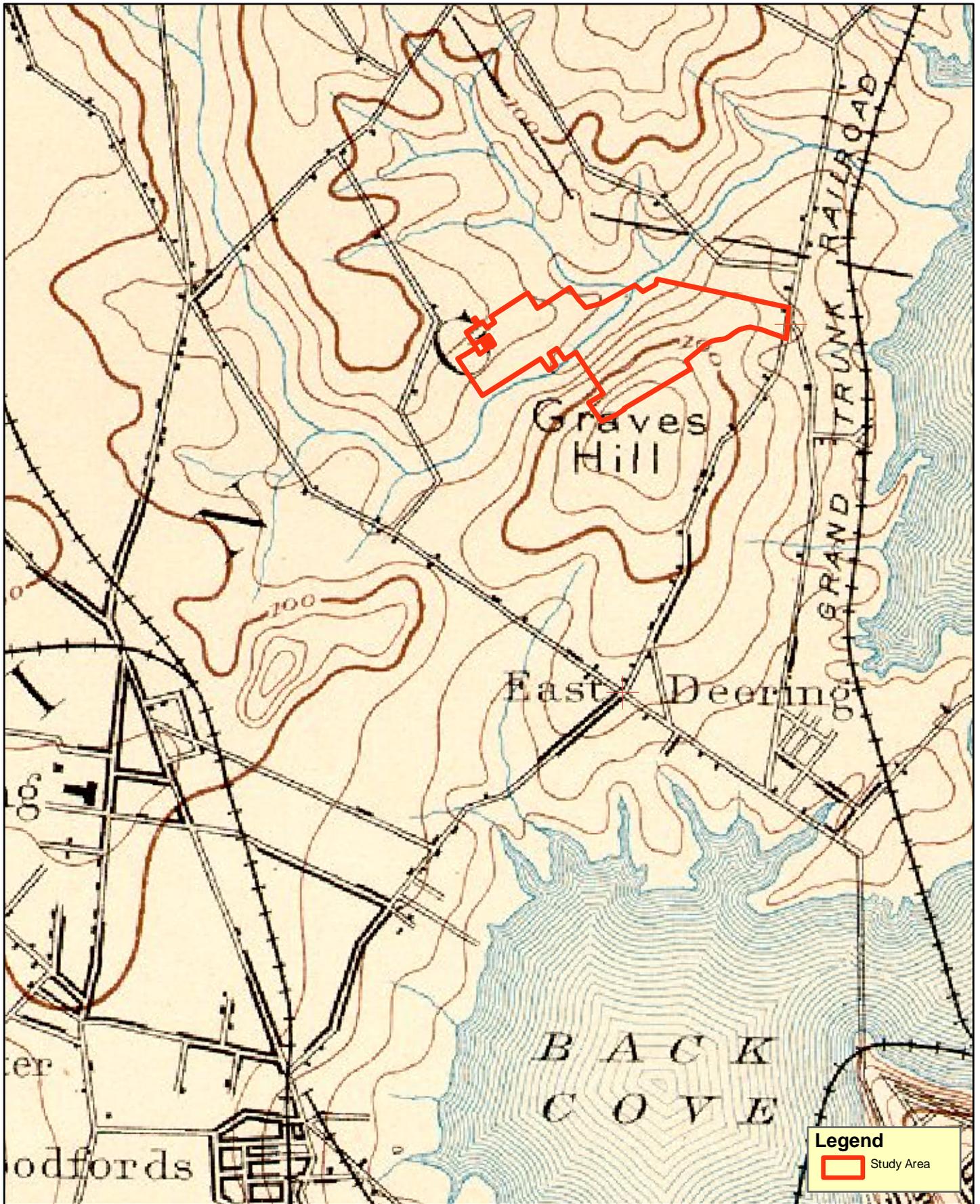
PREPARED FOR
CITY OF PORTLAND
 PREPARED BY
 SEBAGO TECHNICS, INC.



USGS Map
OCEAN AVENUE RECREATION AREA
Asset Inventory And Vision Plan

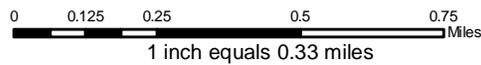
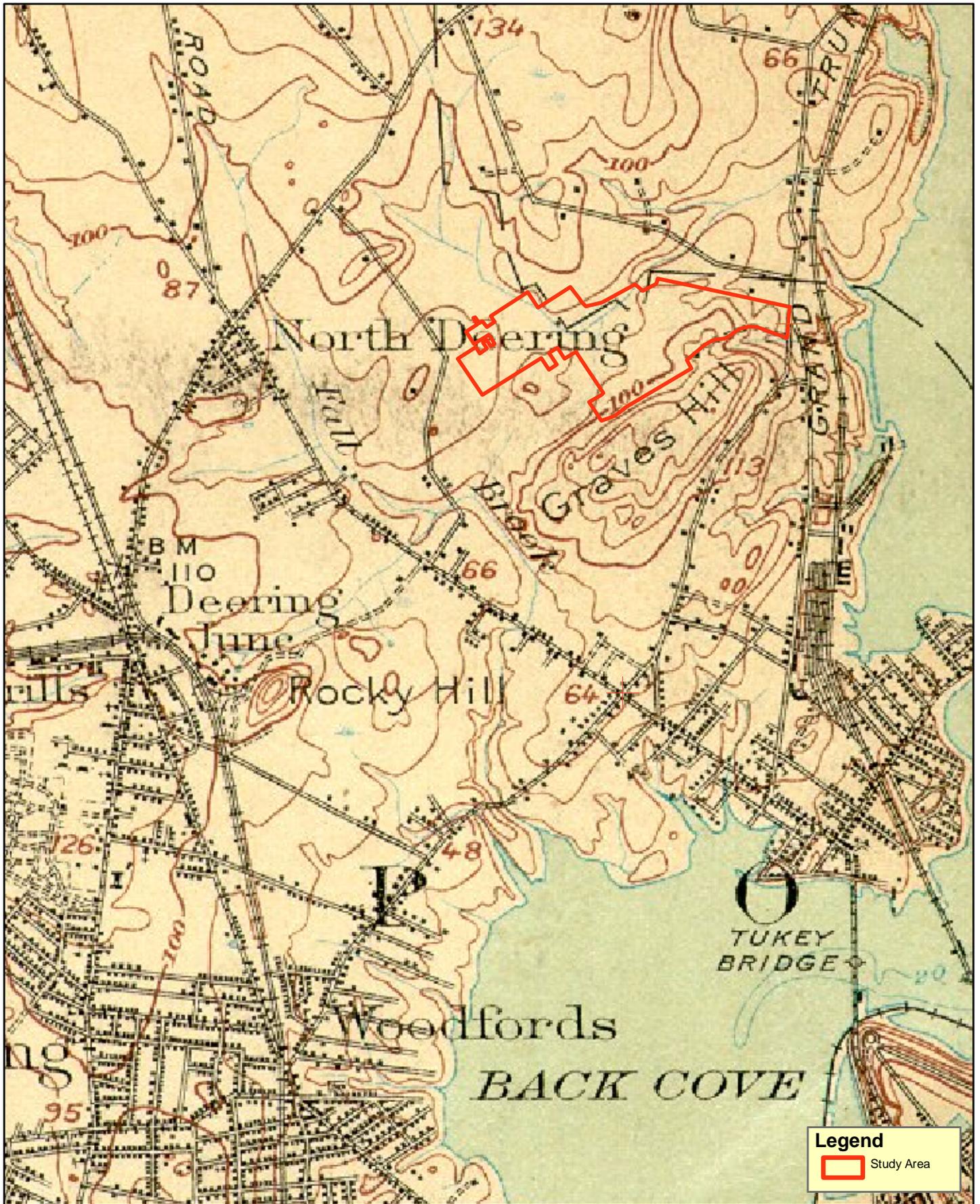
1 inch equals 0.33 miles

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SEBAGO TECHNICS, INC.



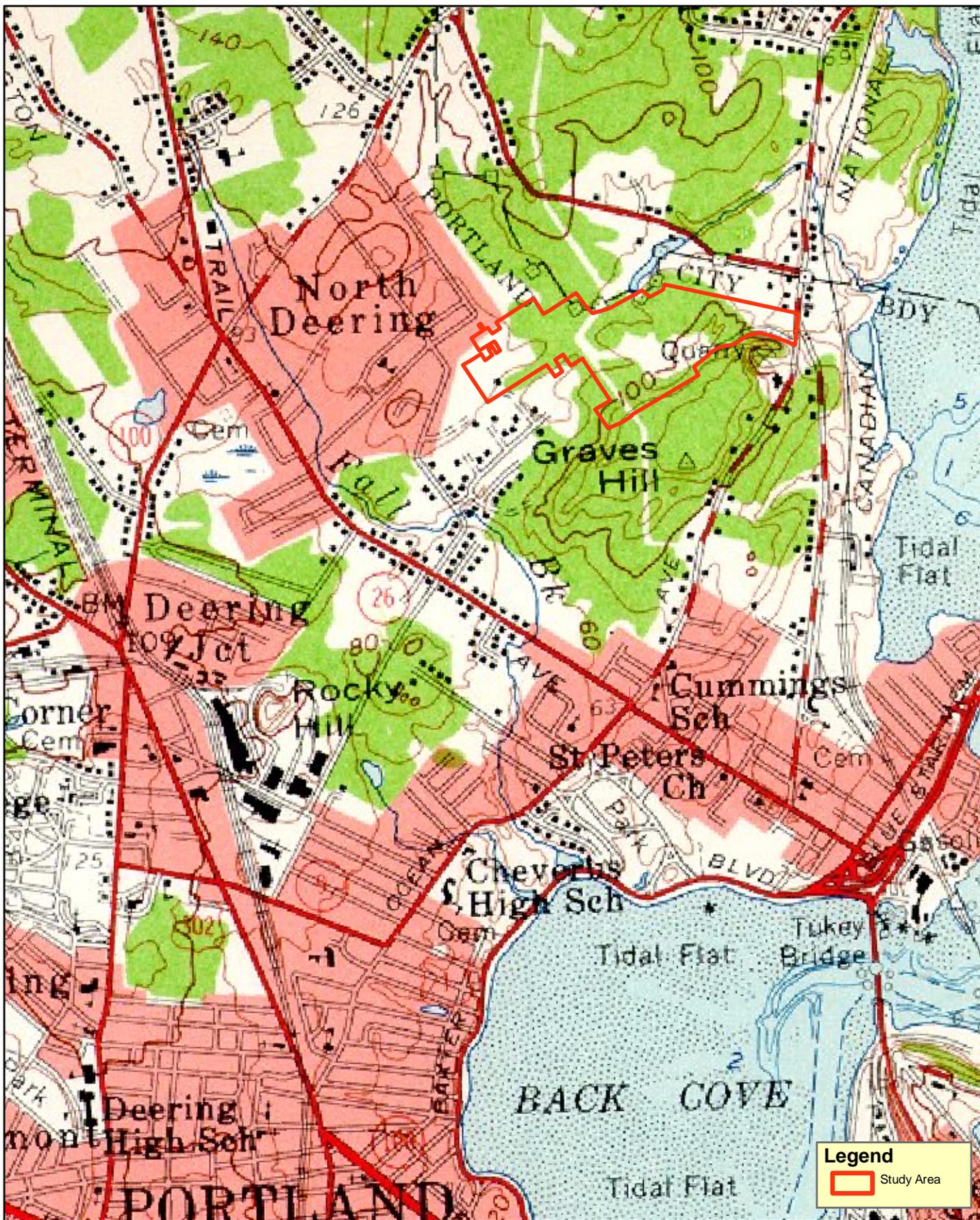
1891 USGS Map
OCEAN AVENUE RECREATION AREA
Asset Inventory And Vision Plan

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1916 USGS Map
OCEAN AVENUE RECREATION AREA
Asset Inventory And Vision Plan

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1957 USGS Map

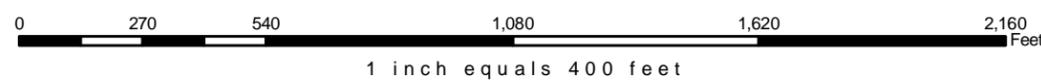
OCEAN AVENUE RECREATION AREA
 Asset Inventory And Vision Plan

1 inch equals 0.33 miles

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Aerial Plan
OCEAN AVENUE RECREATION AREA
Asset Inventory And Vision Plan

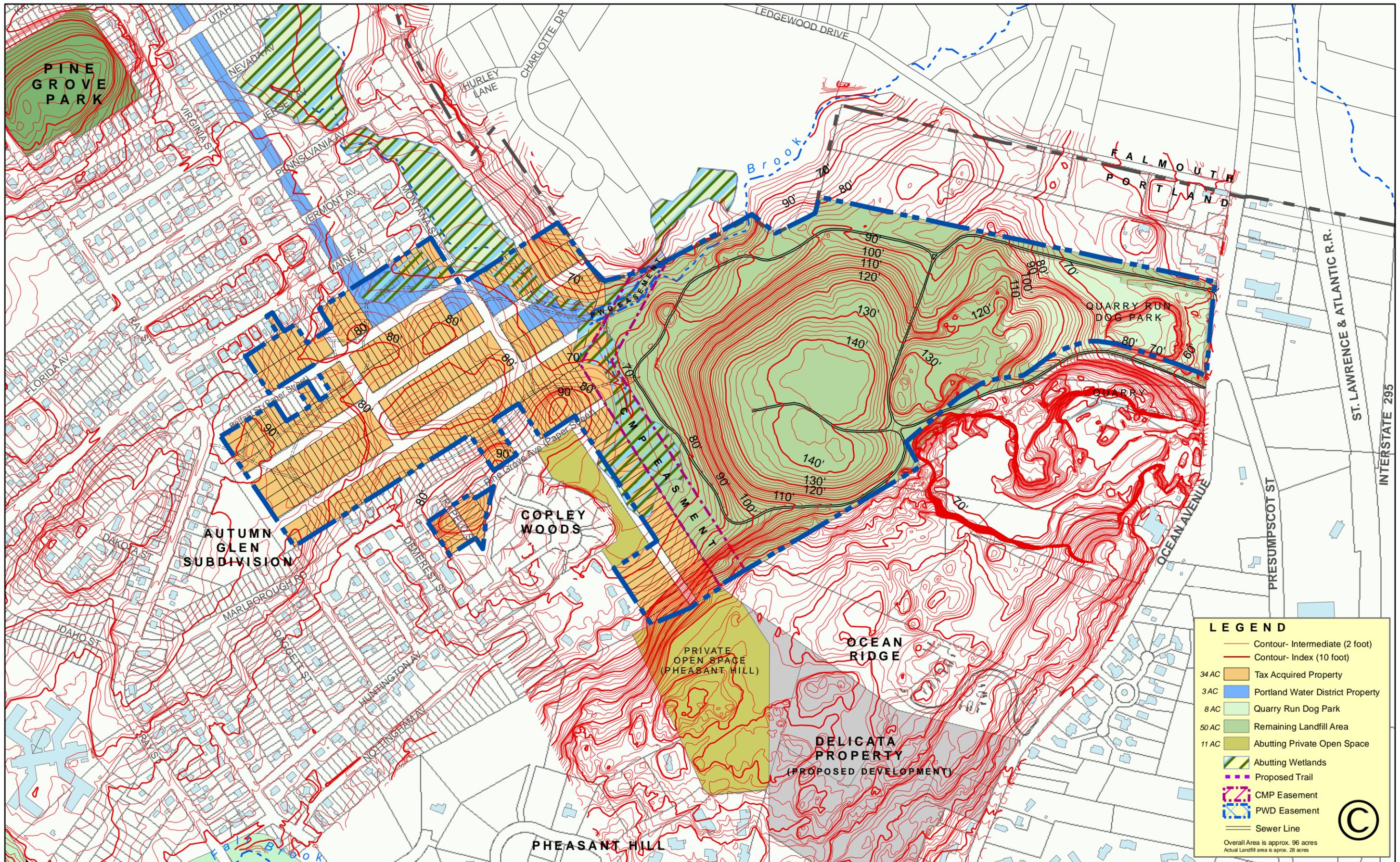


LEGEND

- City Property (96 Acres) *
- City Line

*Total Area includes:
 Quarry Run Dog Park (8 AC)
 Portland Water District (2.7 AC)
 Paper Street ROW in Tax Acq. Area (6 AC)

05188 Aerial STI 1/20/2006

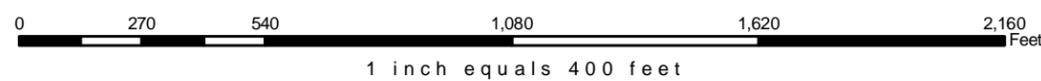


LEGEND

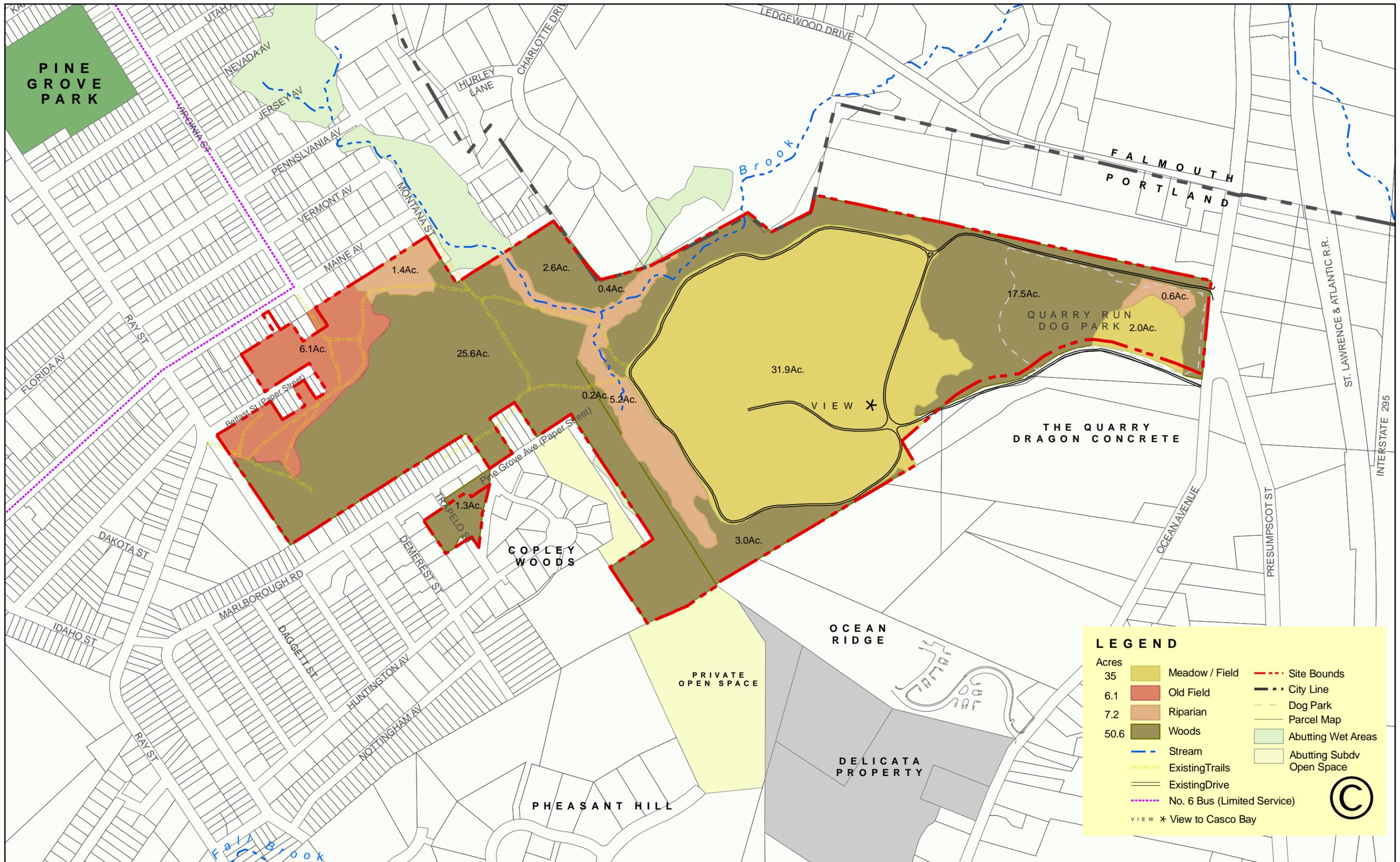
- Contour- Intermediate (2 foot)
- Contour- Index (10 foot)
- 34 AC Tax Acquired Property
- 3 AC Portland Water District Property
- 8 AC Quarry Run Dog Park
- 50 AC Remaining Landfill Area
- 11 AC Abutting Private Open Space
- Abutting Wetlands
- Proposed Trail
- CMP Easement
- PWD Easement
- Sewer Line

Overall Area is approx. 96 acres
Actual Landfill area is approx. 28 acres

Existing Conditions Plan (Available Data)
OCEAN AVENUE RECREATION AREA
Asset Inventory And Vision Plan



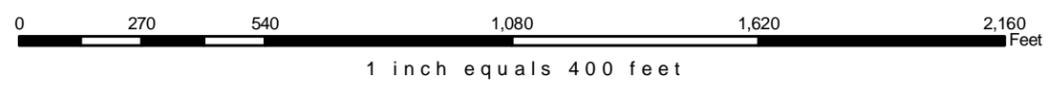
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LEGEND

Acres		Meadow / Field		Site Bounds
35		Old Field		City Line
6.1		Riparian		Dog Park
7.2		Woods		Parcel Map
50.6		Stream		Abutting Wet Areas
		Existing Trails		Abutting Subdiv Open Space
		Existing Drive		
		No. 6 Bus (Limited Service)		
		VIEW *		

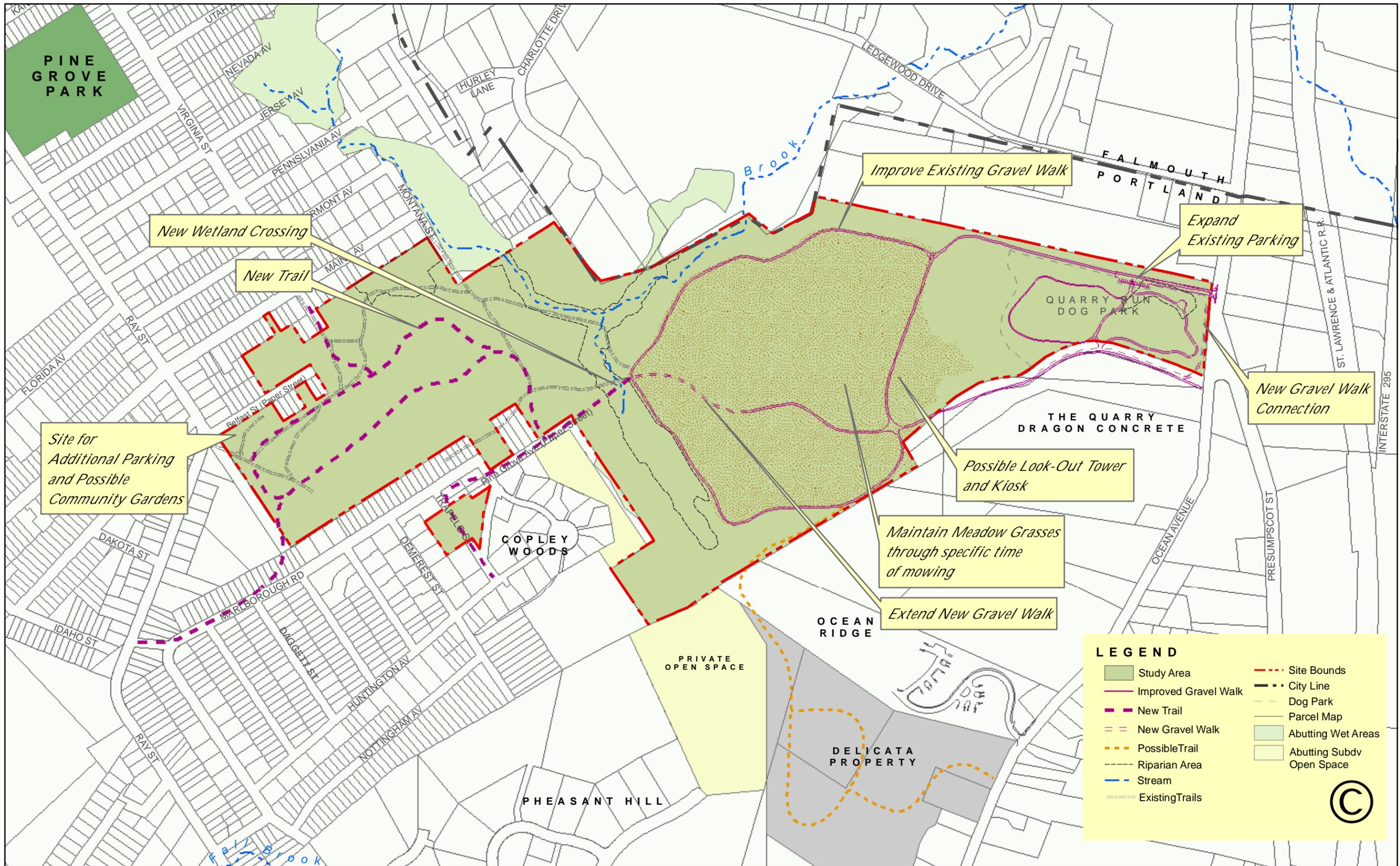
Asset Inventory Plan
OCEAN AVENUE RECREATION AREA
Asset Inventory And Vision Plan



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05188-AssetInvr. ST1 1/06/2006



Site for Additional Parking and Possible Community Gardens

New Wetland Crossing

New Trail

Improve Existing Gravel Walk

Expand Existing Parking

New Gravel Walk Connection

Possible Look-Out Tower and Kiosk

Maintain Meadow Grasses through specific time of mowing

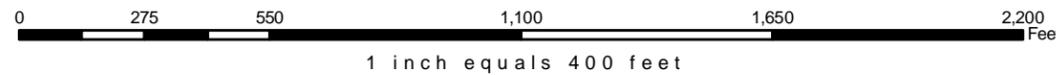
Extend New Gravel Walk

LEGEND

	Study Area		Site Bounds
	Improved Gravel Walk		City Line
	New Trail		Dog Park
	New Gravel Walk		Parcel Map
	Possible Trail		Abutting Wet Areas
	Riparian Area		Abutting Subdv Open Space
	Stream		
	Existing Trails		

©

Vision Plan
OCEAN AVENUE RECREATION AREA
Asset Inventory And Vision Plan



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05168-Vision STI 1/20/2006

Appendix B

Available Data

The majority of the information gathered on the former landfill site and surrounding area was available from the City and is sufficient to establish a good base upon which to prepare an asset inventory to consider the future of the site. Additional sources of information include the following: Meetings with stakeholders, Maine GIS website, STI records (for landfill closure requirements).

The following is a list of data collected accompanied by a brief description and logistical information:

Aerial Information

1. Aerial Photography. Air Photographics, Inc.; November 15, 2001, 1:7200
2. Aerial Mapping. Prepared from aerial photography, information includes: 2 foot contours, outlines of existing buildings and vegetation, edge of pavement for streets and sidewalks, water bodies and utility poles and other above-ground utilities. Source: City of Portland GIS website

Parcel Information and Property Research

The purpose of our research was to gather plans and data for the project site, as well as for abutting undeveloped lands and subdivisions /neighborhoods in the project vicinity. We also researched available information to identify any existing utilities and/or easements on the project site. The majority of the research was conducted at the City of Portland archives. This information was supplemented by discussions with City Department of Public Works personnel and a site walk to review field conditions and apparent utility locations. The following is a summary of information collected to-date:

1. City of Portland Assessing Data. City of Portland Tax Assessor's Maps 405, 411, 413, and 415. Revised September 1978.
2. Subdivision Plans for parcels in the project vicinity.
 - a. Ledgewood Subdivision, Revised Final Plan, Prepared by Land Use Consultants, CCRD Book 123, Page 61, Recorded 6/13/1979.
 - b. Apple Ledge Site Plan, Subdivision Plat (Copley Woods Subdivision), Prepared by DeLuca Associates, Inc., Revised 10/17/1986.
 - c. Apple Ledge Recording Plat (Copley Woods Subdivision), Prepared by DeLuca Associates, Inc., Planning Board Approval 7/2/87.

- d. Alden's Walk, Phase 1 Recording Plat (Phase 1 of Pheasant Hill Subdivision), Prepared by Owen Haskell Surveyors, Planning Board Approval 3/31/1987.
- e. Pheasant Hill, Subdivision and Site Plan (Plan B), Revised 9/30/86.
- f. Pheasant Hill, Recording Plat, Prepared by Royal River Survey Co., Planning Board Approval 2/14/95.
- g. Summer Place PRUD Subdivision Plan, Prepared by Pinkham & Greer Consulting Engineers, Inc., Planning Board Approval 3/05 (estimated – signed/undated plan).
- h. Copley Woods PRUD Lot Plan, Prepared by Sawyer Engineering & Surveying, Inc., Planning Board Approval 1/28/97.
- i. Revised Copley Woods PRUD Lot Plan, Prepared by Sawyer Engineering & Surveying, Inc., Director of Planning and Urban Development Approval 8/27/98.

3. Plans of the Subject Parcel.

- a. Plan of Land for the Cook Concrete Company, Prepared by Owens Haskell, Inc., Revised 3/30/90.
- b. Plan of George Wilson Property, Approved 1/30/1959.

Landfill Closure Requirements

Sebago Technics worked as a consultant to the City of Portland to assist in developing a Work Plan for the Ocean Avenue Landfill in 1999. We have researched our records and also discussed the closure requirements with Brad Roland at the City's Department of Public Works. A copy of the documentation on the landfill closure follows this summary.

A summary of landfill issues/requirements pertinent to the Asset Inventory & Vision plan follows:

The landfill site encompasses approximately 28 acres, which generally lies within the perimeter of the gravel road that circles the site. Within this landfill site area, wooded vegetation is prohibited because the Maine DEP wants to discourage /prevent infiltration of rainwater into the landfill. All areas within the landfill need to be stabilized with vegetation and graded to drain to vegetated sideslopes. Settled areas should be filled, graded to drain and revegetated to further discourage infiltration.

The surface requirements include a 24" loam or other cap. Vegetation with a low root zone is allowed (e.g., grass) but trees/shrubs and other plants with deeper root zones are prohibited.

Any proposed activities within the landfill site will need to be reviewed and approved by Ted Wolfe at the Maine DEP Landfill Closure Program. As part of any request to the Maine DEP, the City will need to demonstrate that the activities will not compromise the cap or landfill.

Activities that could potentially disturb stabilized earth slopes (e.g. mountain biking) may be allowed if the City can demonstrate that appropriate measures are in place to prevent disturbance (e.g., fencing on inside of loop road, signage that notifies bike users to stay on trail system, monitoring to assure users are complying with laws, change in use if violated, etc.). Note that any restrictive measures will need to be installed in such a way as to not compromise the 24” cap (e.g., cannot install signs, fence posts, or other protrusions that extend within or below the 24” cap).

Previous Planning Efforts

Green Spaces, Blue Edges; An Open Space and Recreational Plan for the City of Portland
Ocean Avenue Landfill Master Planning Committee Meeting

Appendix C

Public Meeting Notes and Findings

Summary of Findings for First Public Meeting

Tuesday, December 13, 2005 the first public meeting was held at the Atrium at Cedars on Ocean Avenue from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm. The desired outcome was: 1) An outline of the project; 2) A report on the asset inventory information gathered to date; 3) A list of all the ideas for the future generated by the group; 4) A sense of the group's highest priorities for the future uses of the site.

Approximately 40 people attended from varying backgrounds; among the many residents, the Portland Land Bank Commission and Maine Audubon were represented. District City Counselor Cheryl Leeman addressed the residents and stakeholders and introduced the project team. Pam Plumb, Pamela Plumb & Associates, facilitated the meeting while Sebago Technics presented the data collected to date, asset inventory, site constraints and questionnaire results. A list of all attendees is provided in the appendix.

This initial public meeting is the first and best opportunity to solicit information that could be used to develop a vision for the Study Area. The meeting was structured so that after a brief presentation of the existing conditions and development constraints (two large boards with site data and an aerial photograph, along with slides of the actual site were available) attendees had the opportunity to break out in to smaller groups and informally discuss four questions. These were essentially: 1) What is special about this site? 2) What needs to be saved? 3) What should be enhanced or changed? and 4) What characteristics and uses do you see in the future for the site?

Review of the meeting notes, included in the appendix, it is apparent that the attendees' interests on the Study Area's existing and future use and character is very much in line with the sentiments expressed in the questionnaires. The main difference being the limited discussion on housing opportunity that was represented in the questionnaire results.

Priorities that seemed to be evident at the end of the meeting fell much in line with the general proposal of conservation and passive recreation within the Study Area. Three main common interests expressed from the attendees were:

1. The natural character of the site is special and warrants preserving
2. The wildlife that is present needs consideration and their habitats within the Study Area need protecting
3. Use of the site should be passive and would at a minimum include an enhanced trail system.

Ocean Avenue Recreation Area Public Meeting
Tuesday, December 13, 2005
The Atrium at Cedars
6:30 – 8:30 PM

Notes from the Small Group Session

What is special about this site?

Group I:

- Walking trails
- Habitat
- Open space
- No housing
- Worried that area filling in wetlands with subdivisions
- Open access to wetlands
- Protection of wetlands
- Size of the open space / scale
- Wild life

Group II:

- Woods and wildlife
- Run/snowshoe both on capped area and woods behind
- ? with grand children
- Fox, deer, birds, flowers
- Birding; the dragon fields; when moved late in season; good for sparrows and migrants; 9-10 species of sparrows, bobolinks
- Green island surrounded by development
- Good for hawks
- Should protect it for wild life value
- Wooded area; granite ledges valuable; nice escape; an oasis in the city
- Meadow area is valuable

Group III:

- Country atmosphere
- Relax
- Close at hand
- Bird watching, see more birds here than anywhere
- Varied animals
- Coyotes
- Link to neighborhoods besides asphalt
- Draws in many neighborhoods that are different culturally; serves as a link
- Large open undeveloped area; nice that it is large enough to get a little lost
- Mountain biking
- Great place for kids

- Sledding
- Cross country skiing
- Variation in the lay of the land
- View of Casco Bay
- Good year round
- Concern that the motorcycles and ATV's are degrading the paths

Group IV:

- It's a landfill—man-made land
- The geography allows for a lot of trail connections
- Beautiful views
- Variety of habitats
- Wildflowers
- Well developed woods
- Abutting densely developed areas

Group V:

- Feels very isolated
- Existing trails
- Simplicity - not overdone, very natural winding paths

What needs to be saved?

Group I:

- Open space / preservation
- Variety of habitat
- Property abutting area
- Existing trails
- Feel of being untouched

Group II:

- Open space; wet land, grass lands
- Wildlife habitat
- Public access trails
- View is significant as well
- Forest on tax acquired property
- Keep open space for kids to learn about wildlife

Group III:

- Land as open space
- One recreational area with access from neighborhoods
- Trail system
- Habitat

- Wetlands
- Grass lands
- Access from roadway systems
- Save it the way it is

Group IV:

- Connectivity: it is essential for wildlife as well as people
- Access in general
- The variety of wildlife and landscape features
- Variety of habitats is important

Group V:

- Save as much as possible – no housing

What should be enhanced or changed or added?

Group I:

- Trails enhanced
- Accessibility / mud trap
- Debris from old land fill cleaned up
- Old car
- Enhancement of Portland trails
- Additional housing / well planned, Vista housing, smart growth / clustered housing

Group II:

- Mowing schedule should be selectively timed
- Enhance the trail system; ATV damage, etc.
- Pedestrian trail friendly
- Add programs / nature walks regularly scheduled
- Interpretive signage
- Better access (are you allowed) property boundary lines
- Not paved, but better trails
- Minimize ATV use
- Not appropriate for mountain bikers, especially in uncapped areas
- Mountain bike use is problematic
- Links to other trails, to Portland trails net work to Pine Grove Park to Lyseth School
- Alternate parking?
- Get rid of the tires

Group III:

- Kiosk
- Attention to maintaining trails – ATV use, bridges over access points
- Signage

- Grade trails; trail maintenance in general
- Designated motorized and non-motorized areas
- Establish rules for trails
- Multi-purpose, mapped trails
- Benches
- Rest areas
- Designated parking and access points created

Group IV:

- Improve trails and entrances, provide trail maps
- Some ADA accessibility – near a senior high rise?
- Keep access for bikes and dogs
- Toilets
- Keep areas that are off leash as off leach
- Parking at several access points
- Limit and control ATV, snowmobiles and other illegal uses. Are there trail designs that discourage motorized use? Increase signage with rules.
- Can we enhance the vegetation on cap of landfill – more flowers?
- Clean up “emerging” trash

Group V:

- Access from Falmouth and from Portland
 - Too much access, should be controlled
 - Access from a street or path okay but not just uncontrolled, wandering through backyards and woods
- Portland Trails
 - Use Portland Trails as a model of how this recreation area should be set up: Know where the trails are, clearly marked on trees, Trail maps at controlled entries
 - Good understanding of difference between private and public property.
 - Not even a “trail system”, just a dry place to walk, any other improvements should be very minimal.
 - At existing Portland Trails site, have they surveyed abutters to see what perceived impacts are or to see if Park users have suggestions for improvements? This may be worthwhile and provide a good starting point since they have been in-place for a while
- Fence off quarry
 - easy for kids to access
 - attractive nuisance that could be dangerous
- Inside landfill perimeter roadway:
 - Uses are very limited
 - Don’t encourage people to get up there
 - Concerned with bike trails, ruts, etc. as that could lead to contamination
 - Could create a mowed path winding through butterfly & wildflower garden
 - Minimize mowing

- Tower – could construct view tower near quarry
- Tax acquired lands
 - This area seems to be “reclaimed by nature”
 - What is the history of this area?
 - History may be interesting, part of educational or natural interpretive exhibits

In your vision of the future of this site, what characteristics and uses do you see?

Group I:

- No ATV / motorbikes
- Bo bicycles
- Keep it non-motorized
- Upgrade of existing trails
- Bridges / boardwalk
- Clustered housing
- Low impact
- Open space; natural nature of the area
- Special quality of Portland

Group II:

- Passive use; not athletic fields
- Sledding?
- Cross country skiing
- Birding
- Education programs / nature programming
- Park – similar to its current state

Group III:

- Enhancement of natural recreational, passive activities
- More non-motorized use of trails
- Ease of access fro neighborhoods
- Keep it wild
- Monitoring and remediation of erosion around the land fill
- Passive natural amenities and enhance non-motorized, passive recreation
- Create more access points and reduce need for parking

Group IV:

- Permanent protection and permanent access of open space
- Year round drinking water and toilets at Dog Park and in “tax acquired” area
- Avoid tennis courts/playgrounds/etc. on grounds—City has enough
- Possible affordable housing opportunities nearby or on small part of land that is in balance with the conservation, recreation and open space opportunities of the study area.
- Maintain current access to dog walking.

Group V:

- View tower near quarry
- Improved access control:
 - Too much access – need control
 - Dog park – sign says “dawn to dusk” but gates are never closed.
 - People are hanging out in woods at night; find mattresses, hunters
 - More ‘positive’ use may drive out negative users – advertise to public
 - Major negative is ATVs ~ creates ruts and makes walking dangerous
 - Fencing: At the right spots, like Portland Trails (Stroudwater), and to block ATVs
- Firearms ordinance is different in Portland than in Falmouth
 - Know people are hunting.
 - Possibly add signage to make hunters aware they have crossed the line from Falmouth (where hunting is allowed with a shotgun) to Portland (where no hunting is allowed), could post “No hunting with firearms”.
 - Wildlife is a draw to hunters
- Community Gardens ~ could work in undeveloped area around Kentucky Ave.
 - “Cultivating Communities” is a new non-profit in Portland that promotes sustainable agriculture – they currently are in need of land
 - This group is grant funded and they lease land. Use gardens as teaching schools
 - Only existing community gardens in City are on western side (not eastern side)
 - Land required based on 20’ x 20’ plots
 - Group could have involvement with Parks & Rec.
- Keep it natural
 - Heard a rumor that a developer was looking at putting 300 units in
 - Does not fit and is not desired by neighbors to have more housing
- Do the most at the lowest cost
 - easiest sell to taxpayers
 - need to sell to “all” of Portland, not just locals – keep that in mind
 - lot of existing trails, keep those
 - minimal new development
- No ballfields – parking and other issues (draw a lot of people at one time).
- Build trails to maintain a good buffer between trails and houses.
- Notification of abutters in Falmouth
- Advertising –
 - inform people about the park and how it should be used (What/where, hours, Uses allowed/not allowed, Notify the public)
 - more positive use may drive out negative users

Notes from Flip Charts

Report out from the small groups on what they want for the site:

- Maintain wild life characteristics: animals, birds (have an appropriate mowing cycle to support that)
- Permanently protected open space; especially dog walking (some proponents for housing)
- Natural character; non-motorized uses; use boulders and narrow bridges to enforce that
- Enhance existing trails; open space (one proponent for housing designed into the park land)
- A site for community gardens
- Controlled access, security (Portland Trails Model)
- More access points to spread out the parking
- Kiosks with information
- Marked trails with maps
- Clean up of site
- Year 'round drinking water and toilets
- Some wheel chair accessibility
- Good buffer between trails and houses; control hunting from the Falmouth side
- How to enforce the rules
- Keep it all wild
- Trail connectivity
- View tower

General Meeting Notes

- **Introductions**
 - Review of purpose, agenda and ground rules for the meeting
 - Desired Outcomes
 - Present an outline of the project
 - Report on the inventory information
 - Ideas for the future, generated in small groups
 - Overall sense of highest priorities for future site use
- **Chris Di Matteo of Sebago Technics gave presentation of the site with maps and handout of the Asset Inventory Brief**
 - Area under consideration includes the capped landfill, adjacent tax-acquired property, and the 9 acres of Quarry Run Dog Park
 - Also adjacent is Water District property and a CMP easement
 - 90+ acres total
 - Woods, wetlands, abutting wetland, granite ledge croppings, animal habitat
 - Surrounded by development
 - Gravel road around perimeter, land is 50-70 feet above the road on one side, 20 feet on the other side.
 - There will be 2 more public meetings in addition to this one
 - Joint meeting with the Land Bank Commission & Friends of the Parks Commission as well as a Council Workshop
 - Goal is to collect the input from this meeting and the joint LBC & FPOC meeting to create a vision plan that can be presented at the Council Workshop
 - Natural habitat – words that come to mind?
 - Woods, open fields, grass, flowers, turkeys, deer, streams, water, varied landscape, sky, birds, coyote, fox
 - Question – how much does the town of Falmouth know about this area being under consideration?
 - No direct mailings were done. It was in the Falmouth Forecaster.
- **Danielle Betts – Survey results**
 - Thus far 54 responses to the survey have been received, would like more
 - Encourage those here tonight to fill out a survey and to encourage other citizens to do so as well
 - 75% were familiar with the area
 - 60% had gone to the landfill
 - 50% had gone to Quarry Run Dog Park
 - 40% go to walk/run
 - Most within 5 miles of the site
 - Question regarding desire for more recreation opportunities: passive / active
 - On a scale from 1-5, desired use expressed
 - 4.2 for nature walks
 - 3's for x-country skiing, snowshoeing, nature watching, and hard surface

- Lower ratings for ballfields and biking
 - ATV use lowest rating
- **Site Considerations**
 - Currently owed once a year
 - CMP easement
 - Cannot plant woody vegetation or anything that goes into the ground due to landfill below
 - Erosive condition will occur if biking is allowed, requiring higher maintenance
 - Need to define what is & isn't usable space. Landfill was capped under old (less restrictive) DEP regulations; it must remain undisturbed so can't do much with it.
 - Questions posed as to the potentiality of a permanent cap being covered in cement. Mt. Trashmore in Virginia Beach was converted into a skateboard park.
 - Current cap is 24" and settling
 - When the dog park was developed the area was reviewed by City & stakeholders, creating guiding principles. This information will be utilized.
 - Private open space abuts the space. Part of site development for those subdivisions required small amount of open space. 10 acres owned by ? Hill Association.
- **Report Out from entire room of small groups**
 - Wildlife habitat to be maintained – foxes, turkey, birds
 - Know as “The Dragonfields” by the birding community because of its high use as a migration stopover. Have mow cycle timed to create optimal use by birds.
 - Permanent protected open space with access for recreation
 - Once it's gone, it's gone – no development
 - Portland has enough tennis courts & playgrounds
 - Keep as “special place” that has people wanting to come to & live Portland
 - Some low-impact housing in balance with conservation, open space, and recreation
 - Natural character preserved – non-motorized, passive recreation
 - Enforcement of non-motorized -- use of narrow bridges & boulders
 - Enhance trails and maintenance of trails. Clearly marked trails. Trail connectivity, north to Presumpscot, south to Baxter Blvd.
 - Open up with more access points & reduced parking
 - Buffer between trails and private property with demarcation
 - Security, controlled use, dawn to dusk
 - Information kiosk: proper use, trails marked with coded mapping
 - View tower (destination)
 - Clean up trash
 - Bridges
 - Year round water and toilets
 - Community garden – work with Cultivating Communities (Falmouth residents)
 - Dog walking preserved
 - Some wheelchair access
 - Education pieces

- Falmouth can have shotguns & hunt
- Activities that can degrade/erode the area

- **Other Comments**
 - Housing plan for City talks about thousands of units, need to consider as this will come up with Council when vision plan is presented
 - Council will make the final decision and there are several proponents for housing
 - There will be conflicting issues and outside forces, people in the district need to get involved
 - Small encroachment on open space has been allowed – appreciate this kind of public forum, new to the process
 - Please sign in to stay informed/involved (email or snail mail) – get meeting notes & notices
 - Talk about tonight’s meeting process, encourage neighbors to get involved
 - Survey collection for two more weeks
 - Call City Manager’s office to get blanks
 - Will place on city website

- **Other Meetings Scheduled**
 - 2/14/06 Joint meeting of The Land Bank Commission and Friends of the Parks
 - Council Workshop – end of February

- **Quick Evaluation of Meeting**
 - What worked well – facilitation and handouts were both good
 - What to change – have more/enough handouts

Appendix D Questionnaires and Findings

Summary Highlights of Questionnaire Findings

- 78 responses to the survey have been received:
- 75% were familiar with the area
- 60% had gone to the landfill
- 40% go to walk/run
- Most within 5 miles of the site
- Question regarding desire for more recreation opportunities: passive / active
- On a scale from 1-5, desired use expressed
 - 4.2 for nature walks
 - 3's for x-country skiing, snowshoeing, nature watching, and hard surface
 - Lower ratings for ballfields and biking
 - ATV use lowest rating

Questionnaire Results

1	Are you aware that the Ocean Avenue Landfill site is open to the public?									
	YES: 58		NO: 20							
2	Have you visited the Ocean Avenue Landfill site?									
	YES: 52		NO: 26							
3	Have you visited the Quarry Run Dog Park adjacent to the Landfill?									
	YES: 46		NO: 32							
3	If you have visited the Landfill site:									
	Car	Walk/Run	Bicycle	Bus						
	27	31	11	0						
	b. How far away do you live?									
	< mile	1-5 miles	> 5 miles							
	26	24	0							
	c. How often do you visit?									
	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly	(2-3x month)	(1x day)					
	16	14	11	2	2					
	d. How long is a typical visit?									
	< 15 min	15-60 min	> 60 min							
	3	40	5							
	e. When you're there, do you (circle all that apply):									
	Walk	Jog	WalkDog	Bicycle	ATV	Ski	Snowshoe	Bird Watch	other	
	37	12	29	11	0	8	10	9	2	
	f. Check here if you only visit the Quarry Run Dog Park.									
	7									
4	What other neighborhood facilities do you use?									
	Presump. School	Lyseth/Moore	PATHS	Pine Grove Park	Payson Park	University Park	Undeveloped lands - Virginia St	Presump. River	other	
	6	19	9	3	31	2	6	5		active
	8	20	17	17	31	6	27	29	16	passive
	walking	walking	walking	walking	sledding	walking	bird watch	biking		
	running	running	dog walk	playgnd	playgnd	running	biking	walking		
	voting	playgnd	Play w/Dog		walking(2)		walking	dog walk		
	playgnd				Ball		running	running		
					skating		Play w/Dog	Play w/Dog		
							ATV			
5	Considering all the facilities that you know and use, does the area need more opportunities for:									
	Yes/Active	No/Active	Examples							
	28	23	ATV, x-country skiing ("only on landfill")("more bike trails")("fitness like Fort Williams")							

	Yes/Passive	No/Passive	Examples						
	35	19	bird watching, biking, walking, trails						
6	How important is to connect the LF site to:								
	5	4	3	2	1				
	22	9	16	10	13	abutting neighborhoods			
	16	7	15	16	14	Other recreational facilities in the community			
7	What types of activities would you like to see at the site in the future? (rank the following activities)								
	5	4	3	2	1				
	a. walking/running (hard surface trail)								
	26	17	12	4	13				
	b. bicycling (hard surface trail)								
	12	14	12	8	23				
	c. Mountain biking (unimproved trail)								
	13	11	15	7	22				
	d. Ball playing (recreation field)								
	7	3	14	10	34				
	e. nature walks (trails through meadows)								
	48	13	9		6				
	f. Nature watching (benches near habitat)								
	25	15	11	7	12				
	g. Cross-country skiing								
	30	13	12	4	9				
	h. snow-shoeing								
	28	12	13	6	9				
	I. snowmobiling								
		2	1	7	61				
	j. ATV								
		1		5	64				
	k. View Platform								
	5	9	12	7	29				
	Other: The following received mostly one entry rated between 4 and 5								
		bridges over water; natural habitat; landscape the landfill; blueberry picking							
		sledding; playground; bird watching; dog walking; A 'Deering Oaks Facility'							
8	To what extent would you support the following efforts to preserve the natural aspect of the site?								
	5	4	3	2	1				
	a. A minimal effort...								
	43	8	13	2	5				
	b. In addition to the above, more native vegetation								
	41	14	8	4	3				
	c. In addition to the above, provide interpretation								
	8	5	19	17	18				
9	In what town do you reside?								
	Portland	76							
	falmouth	0							
10	What is your age group?								
	a	b	c	d	e				
	2	11	34	19	11				
11	Additional comments								

Appendix E

Pictures of the Study Area

Picture/Description

- 1-3. The approach from the main drive, facing southwest. Landfill in distance (fall)
- 4-6. Along circuit gravel drive facing west. Landfill on the left. Brook on right
- 7. Brook facing west
- 8. Brook facing northeast
- 9-12. West slope of landfill. Access to tax acquired property
- 13. CMP easement and line
- 14-16. Woods and approach to Copley Woods neighborhood.
- 17. Copley Woods facing southeast
- 18-30 Approach and possible location for proposed trail through woods.
- 31 Proposed trail at the existing old field
- 32-36 Old Field area and existing trails in the vicinity of Virginia Street
- 37-38 Approach and possible location for proposed trail between Virginia Street and PWD property
- 39-41 Existing trail along PWD property
- 42-43 Brook adjacent to PWD trail
- 44. View of Quarry in distance from gravel circuit drive at west side of landfill.
- 45-48 Approach and views of adjacent meadow area.
- 49-51 The approach from the main drive, facing southwest. Landfill in distance (summer)
- 52-54 Along circuit gravel drive heading west. Landfill in foreground.
- 55-57 Along circuit gravel drive heading south. Landfill on right
- 58-59 Quarry in distance, landfill on right.
- 60. Existing trail to top of landfill. Facing west.
- 61. View from on top of Landfill area
- 62. View from on top of Landfill area, Casco Bay in distance.
- 63. Existing gravel trail that accesses top of Landfill, facing west.
- 64. Existing gravel circuit drive facing north towards entrance drive.
- 65-72 Quarry Run Dog Park



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Appendix F
References

Green Spaces, Blue Edges; An Open Space and Recreation Plan for City of Portland
Ocean Avenue Landfill Master Planning Committee Meeting Notes
Portland Trails Linking Open Spaces Vision Plan