

November 14, 2016

Mr. Keith Anderson
Director, D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation
1250 U Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20009

SUBJECT: Dog Park Application Resubmission

Director Anderson:

This letter, along with the attached documentation, is being submitted by The Northern Ward 4 Dog Park Group (the "Group") as the Group's dog park application resubmission. The Group previously submitted an application to DPR for a dog park on District-owned parkland at 3rd and Underwood St., NW on December 10, 2015. That application was subsequently denied by DPR via a rejection letter on October 10, 2016. The Group has since identified a new, preferred site that we believe meets the needs of District dog owners and the community at large, while satisfying both the existing criteria outlined in the D.C. Municipal Regulations (DCMR) and the criteria that the Director of DPR outlined in the recent dog park rejection letter. This new site is located on a triangular parcel of land that is adjacent to the Frank R. Williams Building and the Takoma Aquatic Center building (Appendix A). While this site has approximately .60 acres of land available, the Group would like to request that DPR approve the site for a fenced-in off-leash dog exercise area that is .30 acres in size.

The following reasons support the Group's rationale for selecting this new site:

The site is not too-close in proximity to nearby residences front porches: The rejected 3rd and Underwood St., NW site would have created a dog park whose perimeter would have been anywhere from 130 to 190 feet from neighbors' front porches. The new site the Group is proposing would be over 250 feet from the closest neighbors' front porches and over 400 feet from the closet church. Additionally, the proposed site and nearby homes/the church would be separated by busy streets (5th St., NW and Van Buren St., NW), existing parkland, a walking path, and existing trees and shrubbery (Appendix A-1).

The site streamlines with the existing use of open space: The proposed site is a triangular space located within a total parcel of parkland that is approximately 4.03 acres (Appendix B). This parcel of District-owned parkland is bound by 5th St., NW to the West, Van Buren St., NW to the North, a sidewalk to the South, and the Takoma Aquatic Center to the East. If the proposed triangular site were to be utilized as a .30 acre dog park it would still allow for almost 2 acres of parkland available for picnicking and recreation. The picnicking sites that would remain available on the grounds of the Takoma Recreation Center are exhibited in Appendix C and include:

- a) A covered picnicking site, near the Splash Park, that is several hundred square feet in size (Appendix C-1);
- b) An uncovered picnicking site, near the unused shuffleboard courts, that is several hundred square feet in size (Appendix C-2);
- c) An uncovered picnicking site that is .40 acres in size that is East of 4th St., NW between Van Buren Street, NW and Whittier Street, NW (Appendix C-3); and
- d) Approximately 1.35 acres of picnicking area East of 5th Street, NW near Van Buren St., NW (Appendix C-4).

The site is not located between any heavily used athletic fields: The proposed site is not near any athletic fields. The site the Group is proposing is District-owned parkland that is currently being shown in D.C.'s Atlas system as being owned and maintained by DPR (Appendix D). The proposed dog park site provide a much needed community amenity in a location where it's presence could activate parkland thereby positively impacting Takoma Recreation Center security while also addressing any existing soil, erosion, and water runoff issues at the site. The site is centrally located to three D.C. neighborhoods (Takoma, Manor Park, and Brightwood) in which neighbors heavily support a dog park in their community. The site is also in between two streets that are lined with public trash cans (5th Street, NW and 3rd St, NW).

The proposed site also meets DCMR (733.5) criteria because:

The site is not an area designated specifically as playgrounds or children's play areas: The proposed site is situated over 500 feet from the closest playground.

The site is not an Athletic field or court: The site is over 300 feet from the closest athletic field, and is separated from the closest athletic field by the Takoma Aquatic Center building.

The site is not in a sensitive habitat area or wildlife area: The Group met with a representative from DDOEE at this site in October 2015. This DDOEE employee was familiar with D.C. dog park requirements as they relate to DDOEE criteria. The DDOEE employee reviewed the entire site in person and noted that the site would be "optimal" for a dog park and would make for a "great dog park location." The DDOEE employee also noted that there could be opportunities to address existing land and soil issues near the proposed site during the dog park construction phase. In October 2015 the site was also preliminarily approved by a representative from DPR.

The site is not directly upslope from a community garden: The site is approximately 800 feet from the closest community garden.

In addition to the items outlined above, it is also important to note the following:

The proposed site is next to a pathway that leads through parkland: Similar to D.C. dog parks at Langdon Field Dog Park, Francis Field Dog Park, Kingsman Field Dog Park, S Street Dog Park, and Walter Pierce Dog Park, the proposed site is adjacent to a path where pedestrians walk. Adding a fenced in dog park to this site will provide added security and safety to those who are walking, resting, or playing in this area of the park.

The following existing D.C. dog parks are closer in proximity to churches and/or schools than the proposed site at the Takoma Recreation Center: Francis Field Dog Park, Landsburgh Dog Park, Kingsman Field Dog Park, Upshur Dog Park, Gage Eckington Dog Park, and Shaw Dog Park.

When the Council of the District of Columbia passed legislation authorizing dog parks in Washington D.C. they recognized that the creation of dog parks requires a *certain degree of flexibility, due to the density of buildings as well as the scarcity of District-owned parkland*. Our Group has been extremely flexible in our approach to this process and we now look to DPR to make this site a reality for residents of the community who support a dog park at the Takoma Recreation Center. Our Group has attempted to engage or seek input from various special interests in the community, we have followed the DPR's dog park application process, we have attended every meeting associated with the implementation of a dog park in the neighborhood, we have notified nearby homeowners of possible sites, and we relocated the proposed site multiple times to try and accommodate various special interest groups. We have made every attempt possible to find a location that is suitable for as many people as possible within the community. It is our hope that DPR will review this resubmission and approve this new site expeditiously so that the Group can focus on raising the funds needed in order to help with the construction and maintenance of this important community amenity.

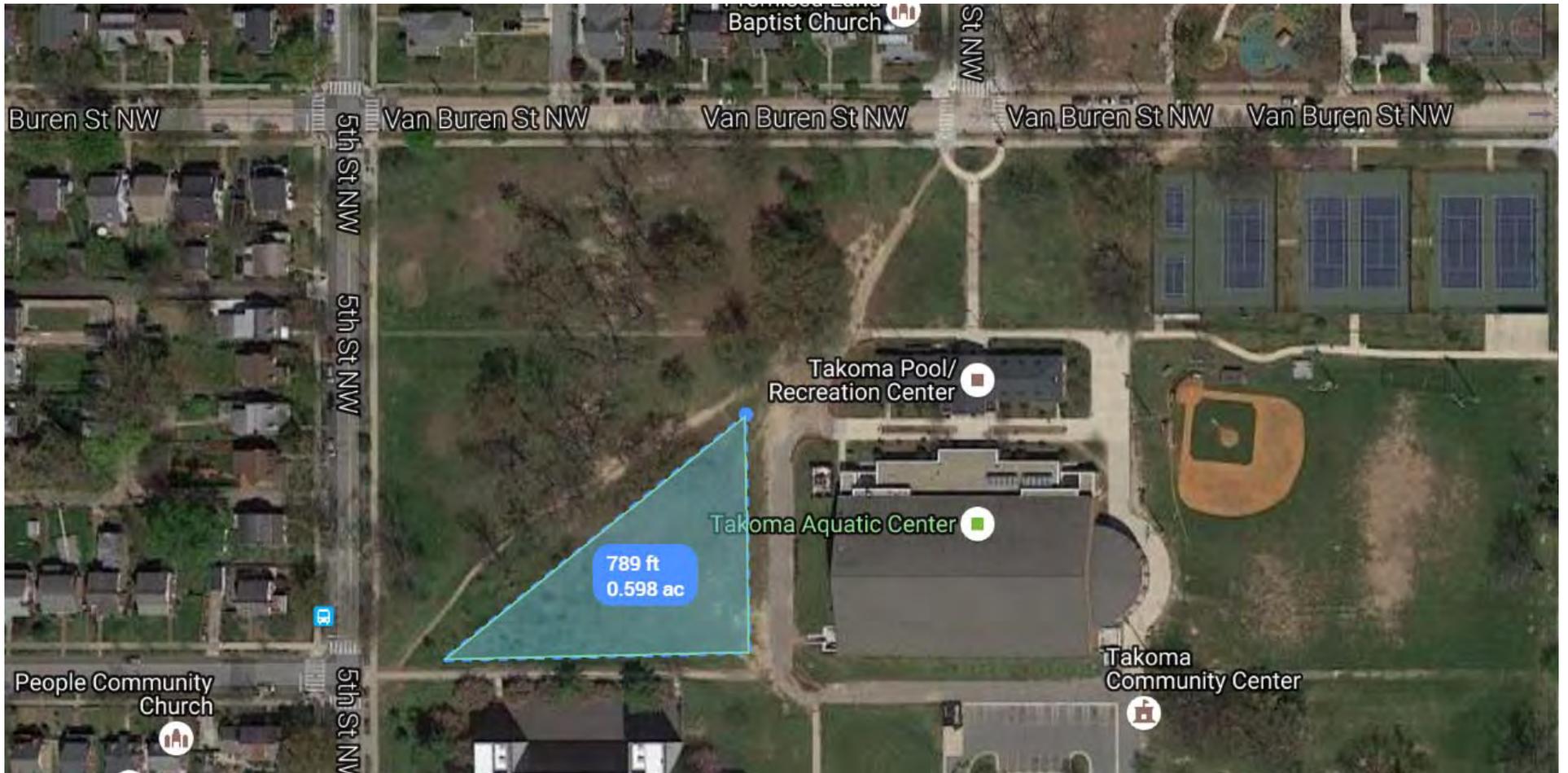
Finally, the Director of DPR has acknowledged that our community needs a dog park in the area. Based on data from D.C. Department of Health (DOH) and evidenced by the large number of dogs and dog owners in the area, our Group also believes that the community has demonstrated a strong need for an off-leash dog exercise area in the community. **Therefore, we are requesting that the Director of DPR also grant this proposed site "time-sharing" status so that neighbors may run their dogs off-leash at this site until a dog park is constructed.**

Sincerely,

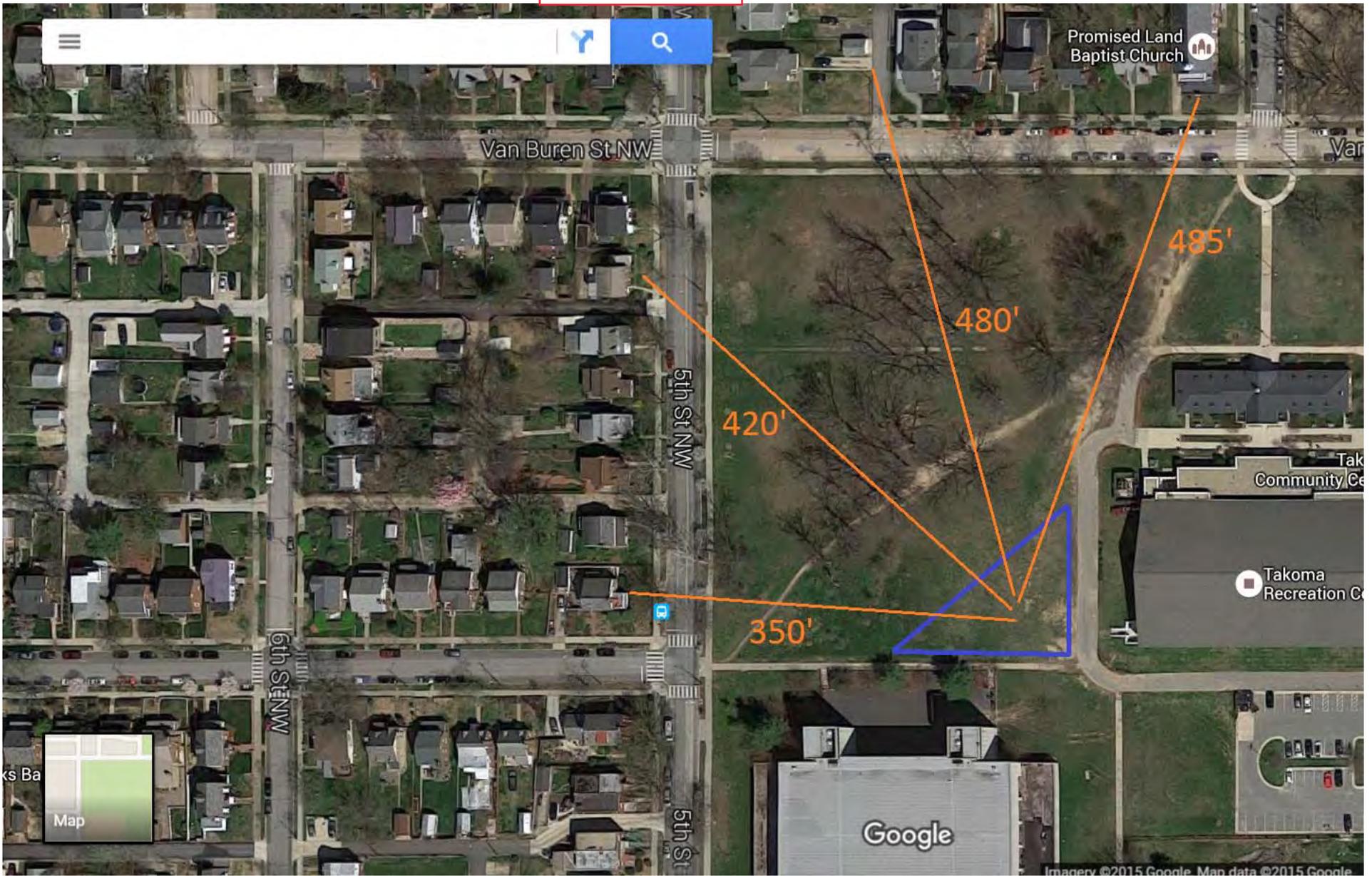
Michael Cohen

Michael Cohen
The Northern Ward 4 Dog Park Group

Appendix A



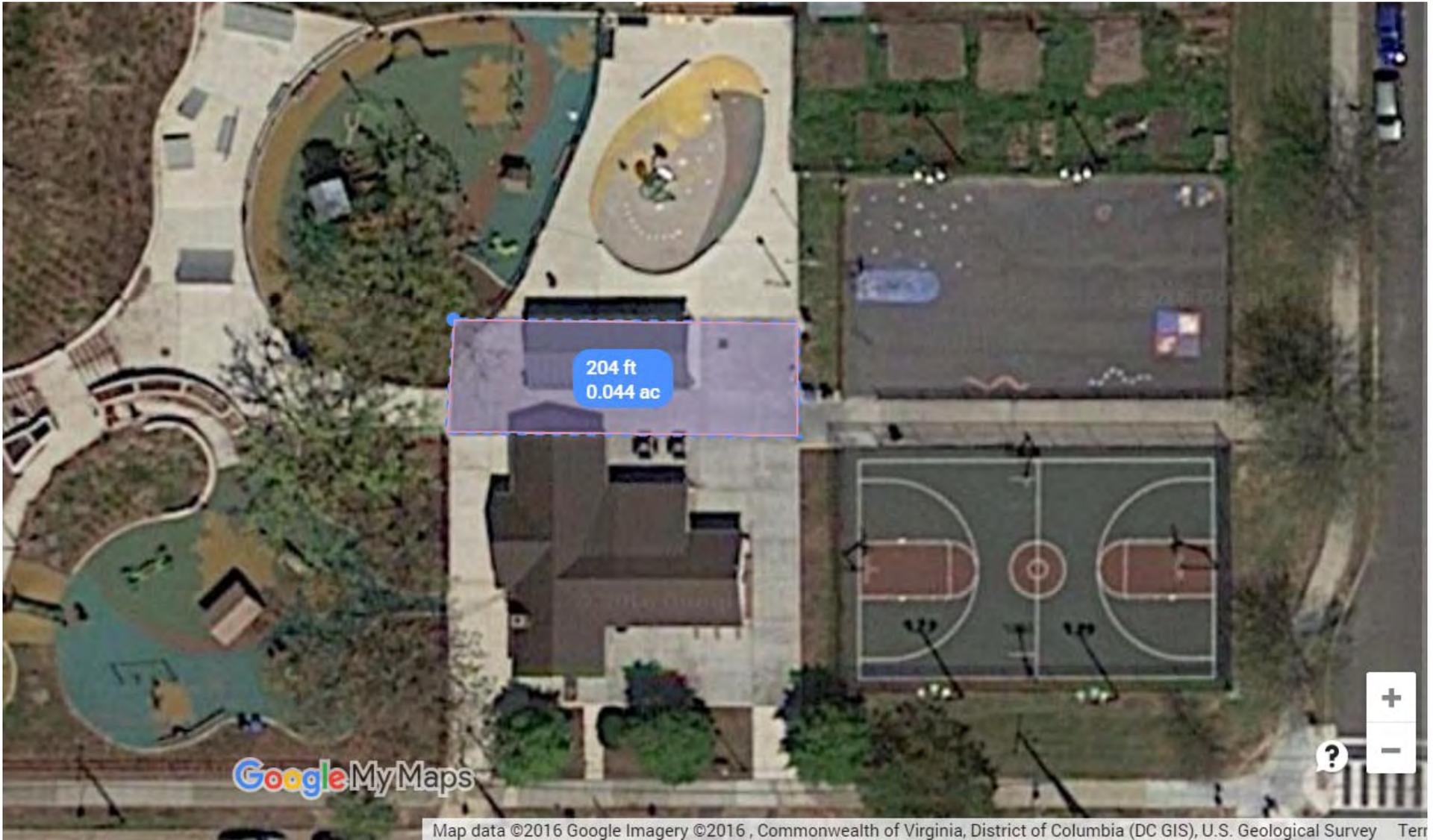
Appendix A-1

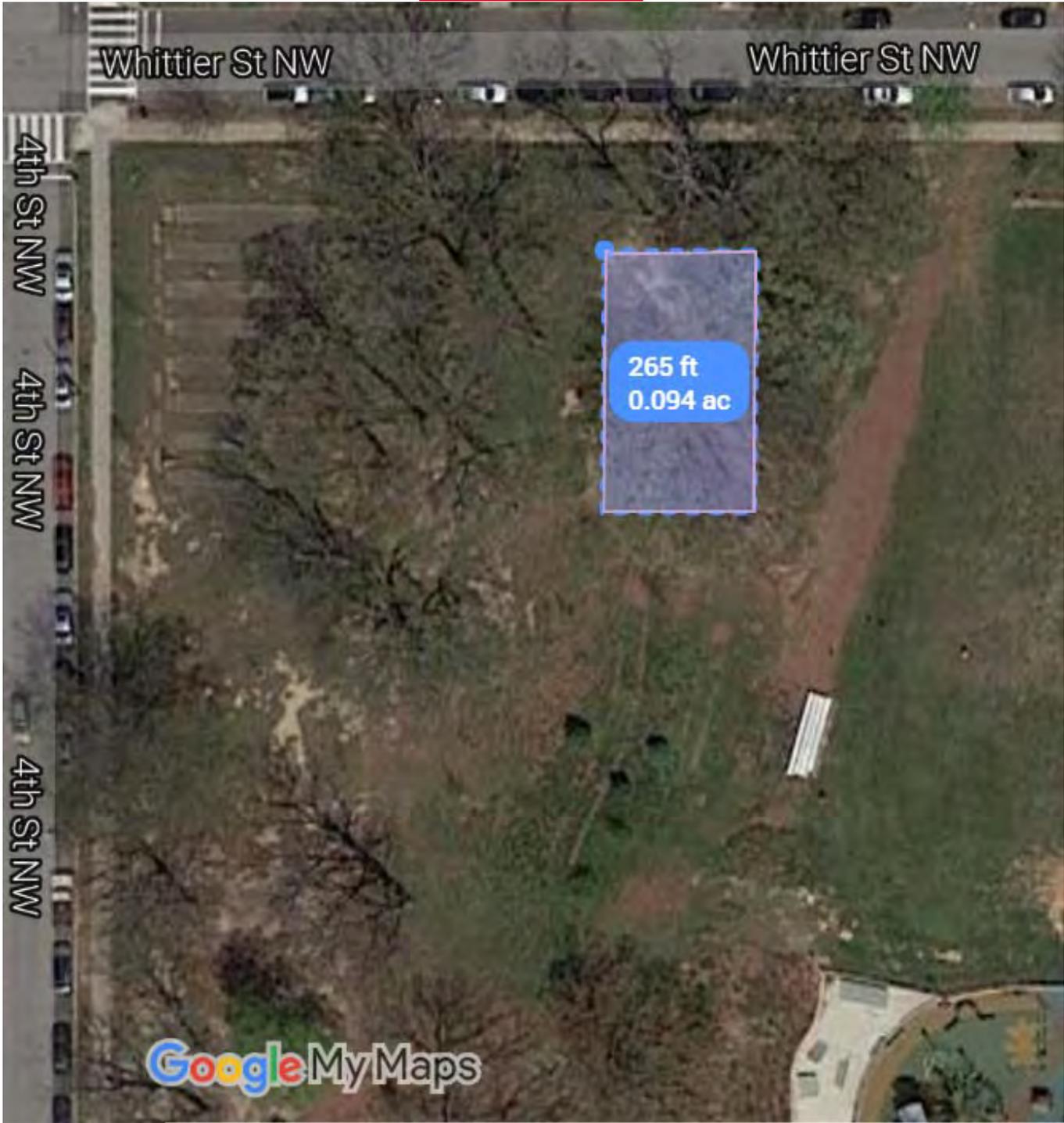


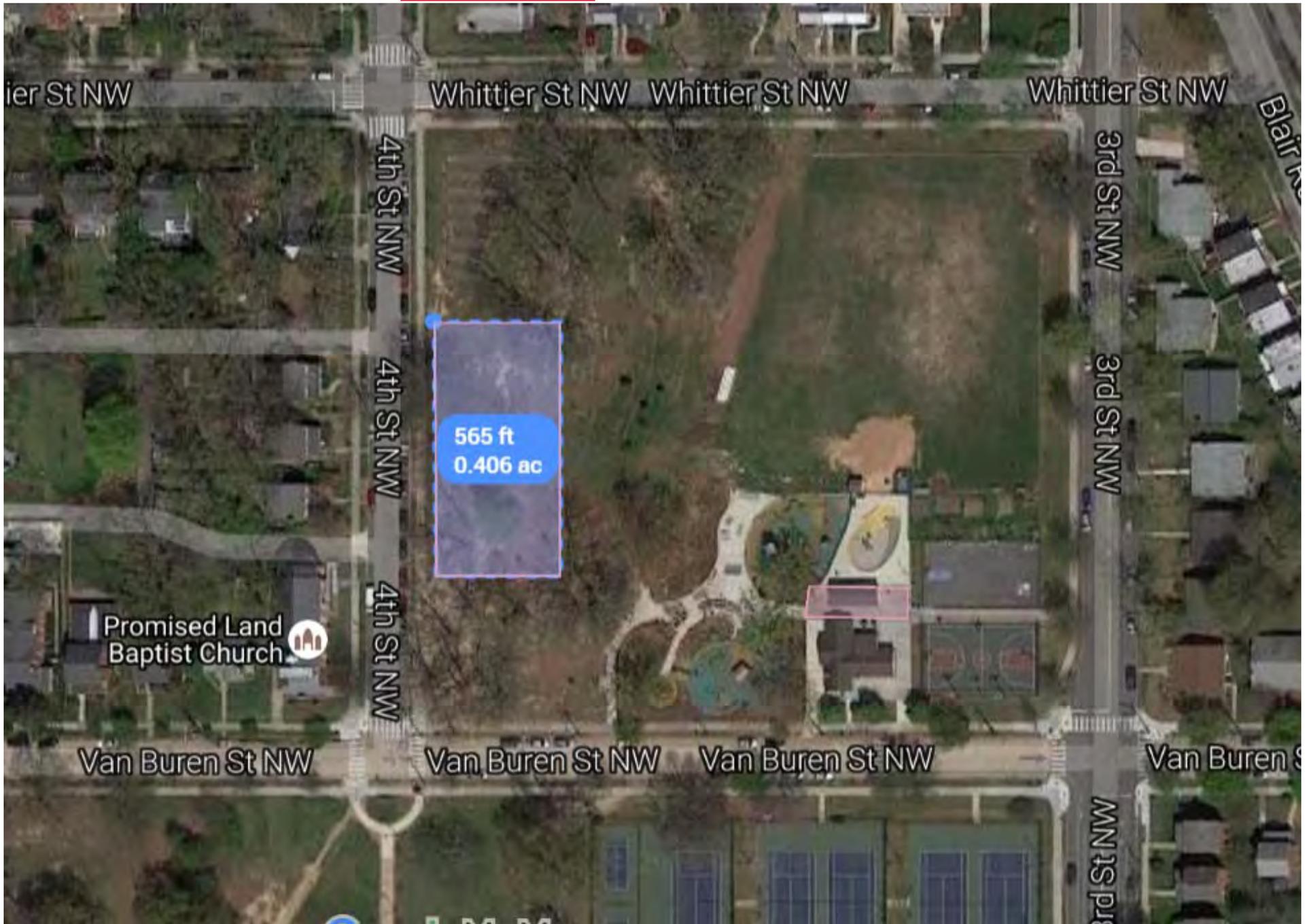
Appendix B

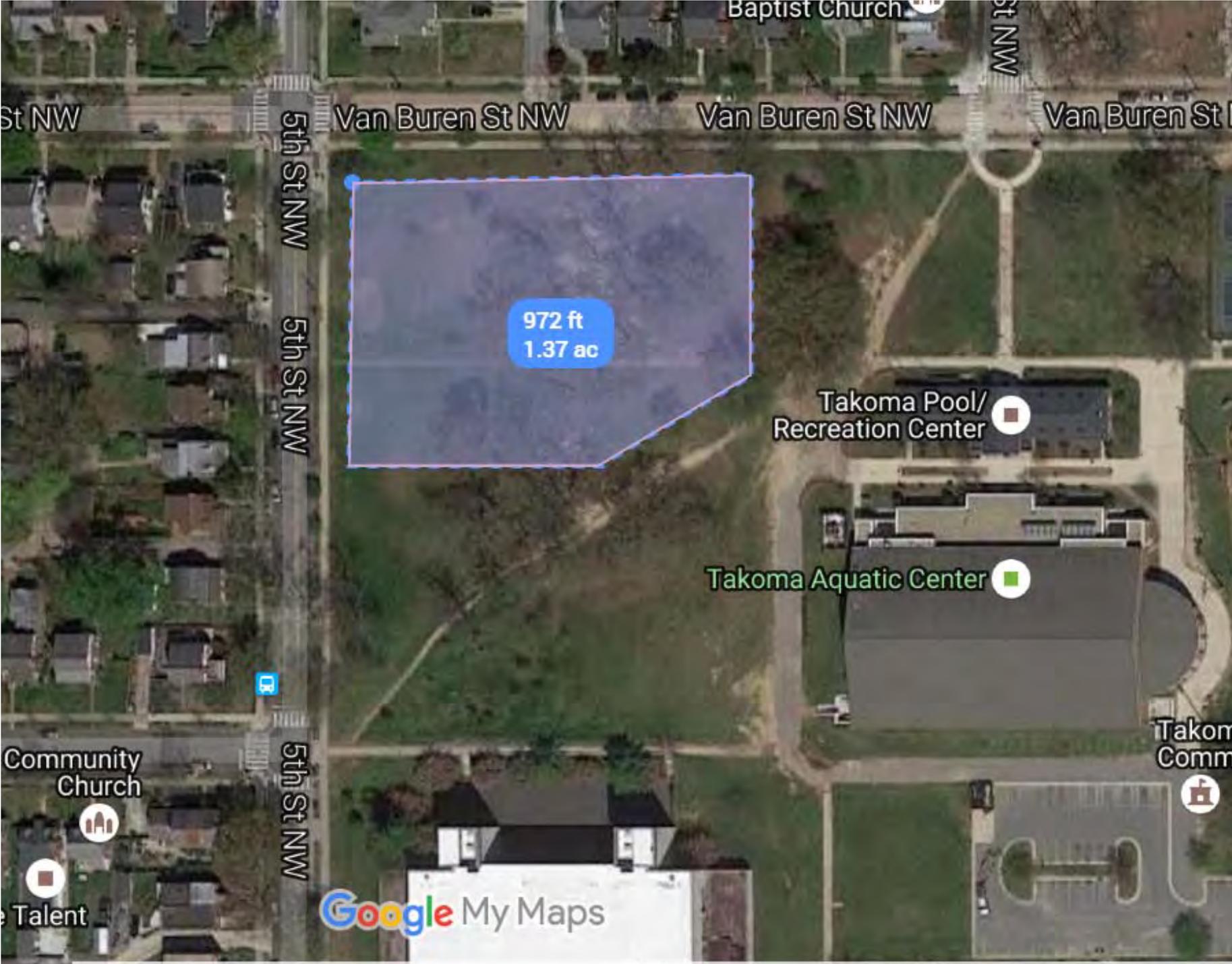


Appendix C-1









Appendix D

