

# Middletown Dog Park

## **What is a dog park?**

A dog park, or off-leash dog exercise area, is a fenced piece of land designated for the use of residents who wish to exercise their dogs safely and allow them to socialize with other dogs. It offers disposal facilities for dog waste, and may provide amenities such as benches, shade, and water.

## **Why does Middletown need a dog park?**

Middletown dog owners do not have the opportunity for dogs to exercise off leash or have a positive environment for dogs to socialize

## **How widespread is dog ownership?**

According to statistics published by the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Pet Ownership and Demographics Sourcebook, just under one-third of America's households include one or more dogs. A community of Middletown's size is estimated to be home to at least 6000 dogs.

However, Middletown only has 2,054 licensed dogs. A Dog Park could help educate the Middletown dog owners about proper licensing and handling in public areas.

## **Have other communities installed dog parks?**

As population increases, additional demands on public open space as well as conflicting interests have resulted in the edging out of certain activities such as dog walking. As a solution to this problem, many municipalities locally and across the country have installed dog parks. The common experience is that after the first park is installed, use by dog owners is so intense and enthusiastic that, to meet popular demand, more parks are created soon afterward.

## **Why should dog owners be considered?**

Pet ownership is a positive aspect of our society. Many studies have shown the benefits of pet ownership to the mental and physical health of people of all ages. Taking a dog into a social situation provides a means for social interaction between people that otherwise may not be possible - it is easy to start up conversations when a pet is present and many friendships begin in this way. For many elderly people, an outing with their dog may provide the only contact with other people in their day. For people with mobility problems, a dog park allows exercising of their dog without walking any distance. For most dog owners, the opportunity to meet other dog lovers is a happy and rewarding experience, just as it is for their dogs to meet other dogs.

## **Why do dogs need exercise and socialization?**

Dogs are social animals. Families and single people own them because they provide affection and companionship - indeed, many people without children in their homes view their dogs as their children. Dogs need exercise. They need to run and play with their owners to work off energy and satisfy their need for challenge and stimulation. In addition, they are by nature pack animals, and should not be isolated from other dogs.

It is a reality that in our society many dogs must be left alone for long hours while their owners go to work. Dogs that are deprived of exercise, stimulation, and socialization may become problems for their owners, their neighbors, and for other dogs because they are bored and because good behavior is learned through interaction with people and other animals. Badly behaved dogs may bark incessantly, dig holes, destroy property, escape constantly, and become overly timid or aggressive and generally difficult to handle. Extreme cases result in animals being given up to the Humane Society or other shelters where, if they are not fortunate enough to find another home, they will usually be euthanized due to lack of space and resources. In order to learn good behavior, dogs need to be brought out of isolation into social situations, but such situations are increasingly few and far between in today's world.

## **How will the parks be maintained?**

At the Hamden Dog Park at Bassett, the staff of the Parks and Recreation Department empty trashcans regularly. Dog waste bag dispensers and shovels should be provided, rules should be posted, and dog owners are required by law to pick up after their pets. The best governance of a dog park would be through self-governance by the regular users who develop a code of conduct and educate new users of the park. Such a group of neighbors/users would monitor the park, help to keep it clean and tidy, and report any problems.

## **Won't dogs fight if they run free together?**

Since dogs are pack animals, they usually get along well together on neutral territory. Occasionally a dog shows aggressive behavior, but park rules prohibit aggressive dogs and such a dog must be removed immediately. Liability for damage caused by a dog rests with the owner, whether on a street, in a home, or on municipal property. Very few problems have been noted in established parks.

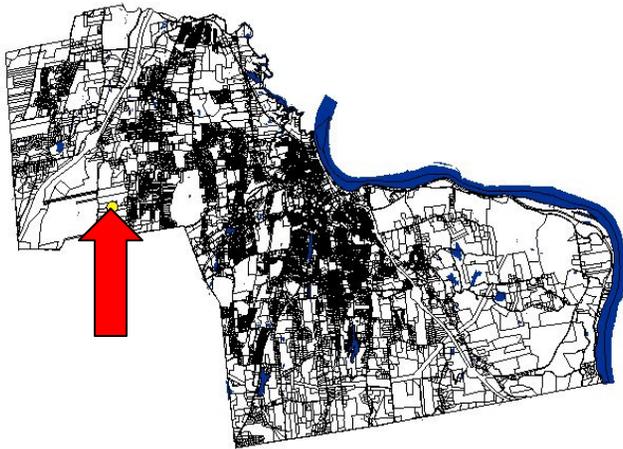
## **Why does Middletown need a dog park?**

Middletown dog owners do not have the opportunity for dogs to exercise off leash or have a positive environment for dogs to socialize.

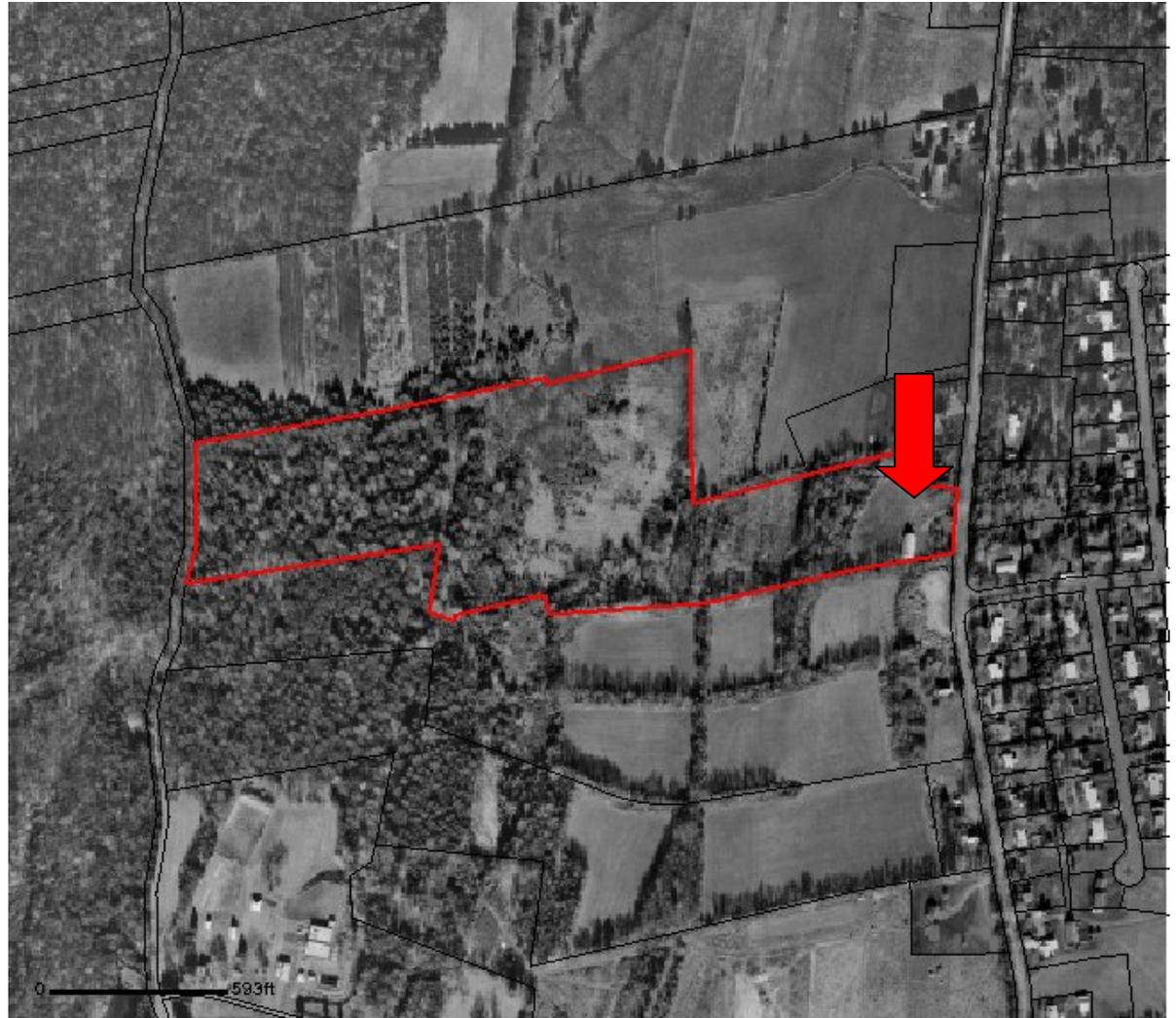
A dog park would enhance the quality for all Middletown residents.

# Tynan Park

Higby Road



0 9487ft



0 593ft

# Tynan Park- Topography Map

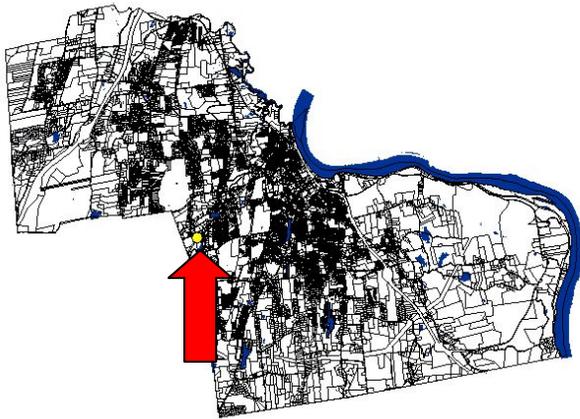
The bold black line  
shown equals  
approximately 705  
feet of fencing.





# Marzalek Park

Middlefield Street



# Marzalek Park- Topography Map

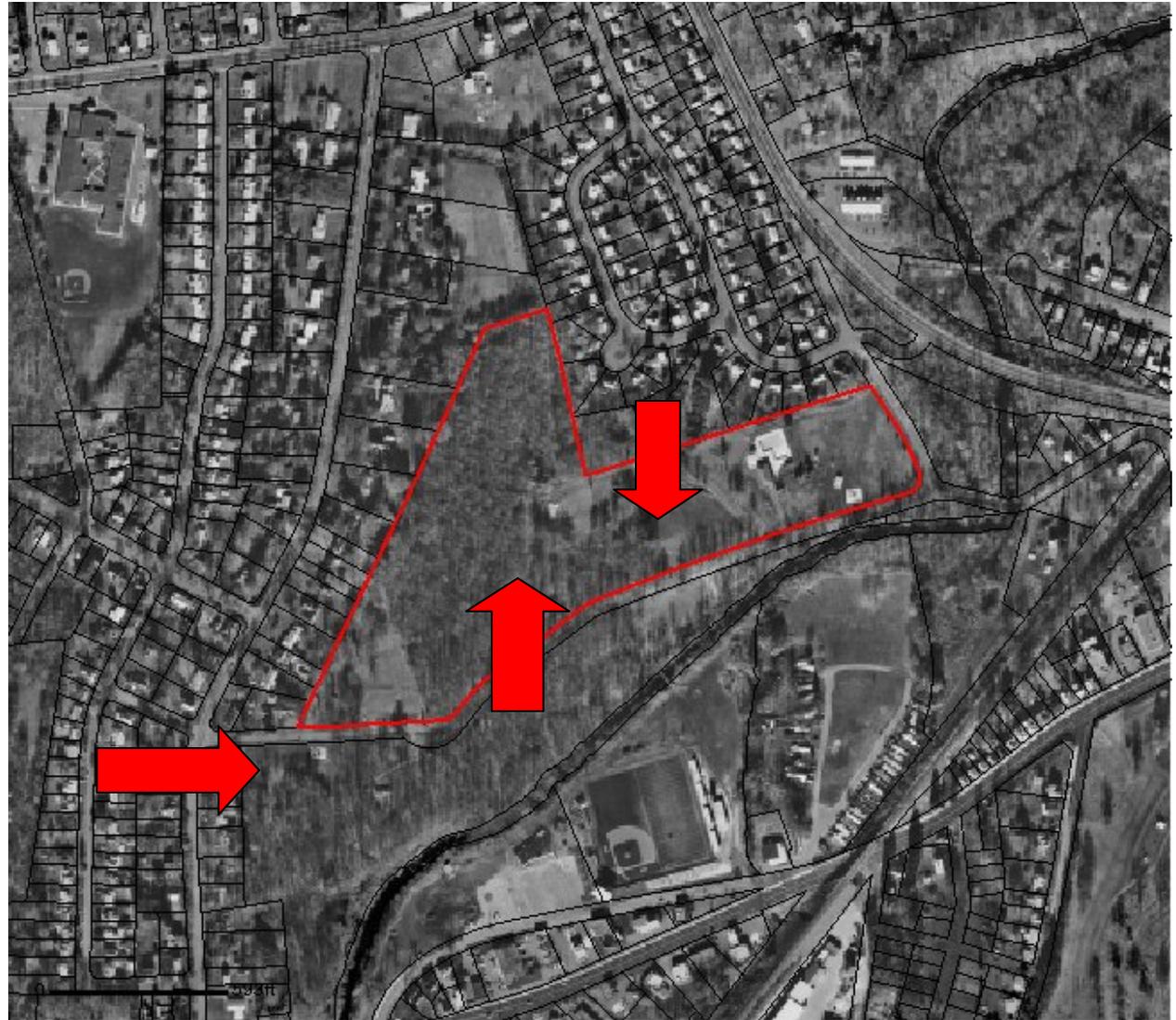
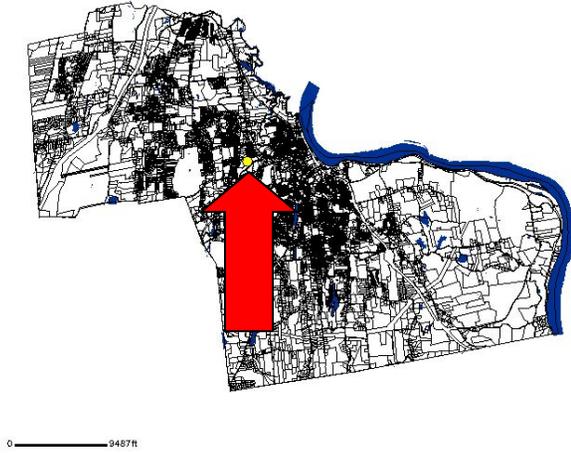
The bold black line  
shown equals  
approximately 375  
feet of fencing.

All other sides  
currently have existing  
fencing.





# Veterans Park



# Veterans Park

## Option A

### Topography Map

The bold black line shown equals approximately 1,776 feet of fencing.



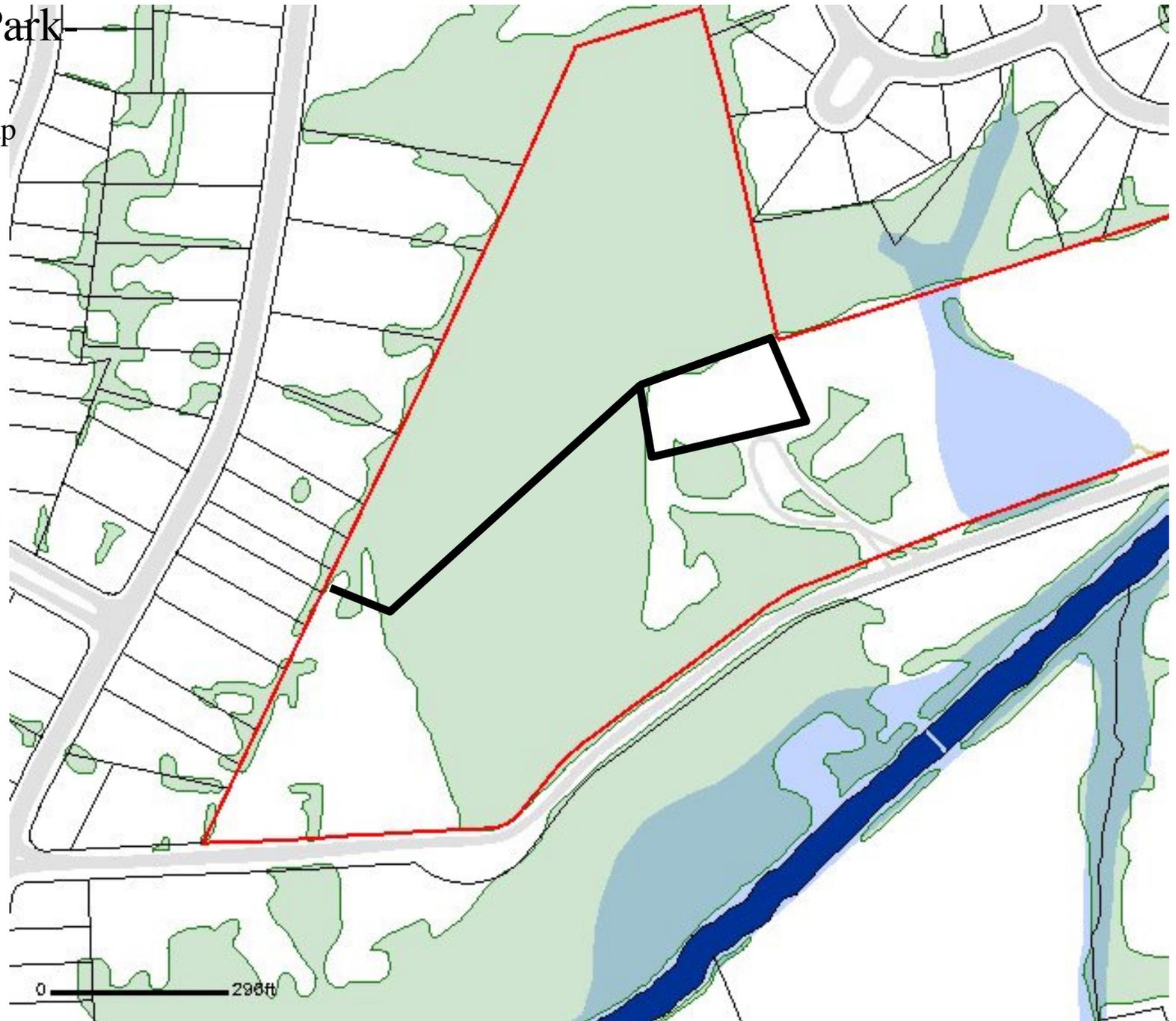


# Veterans Park

## Option B

Topography Map

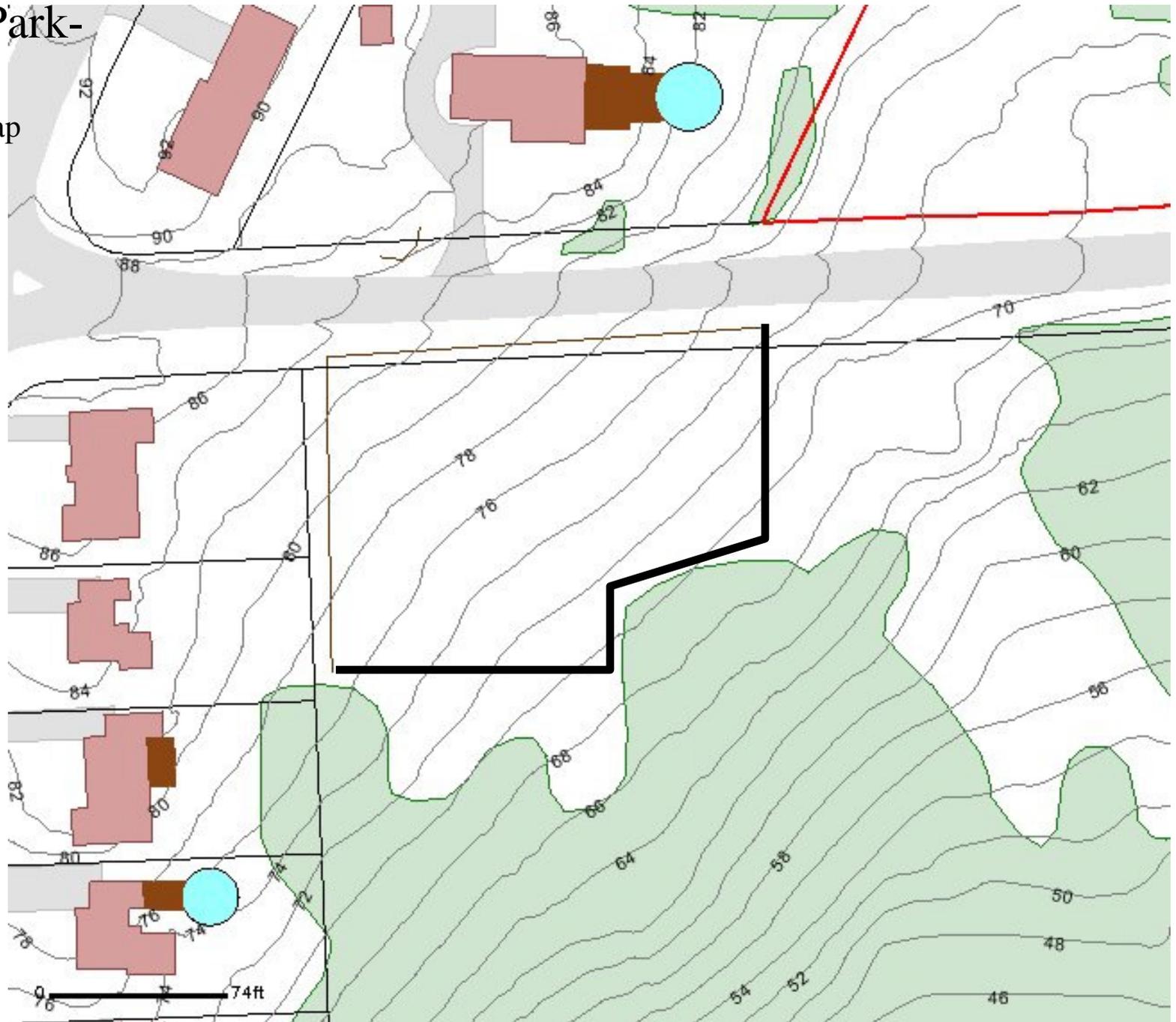
The bold black line shown equals approximately 1,420 feet of fencing.





# Veterans Park- Option C Topography Map

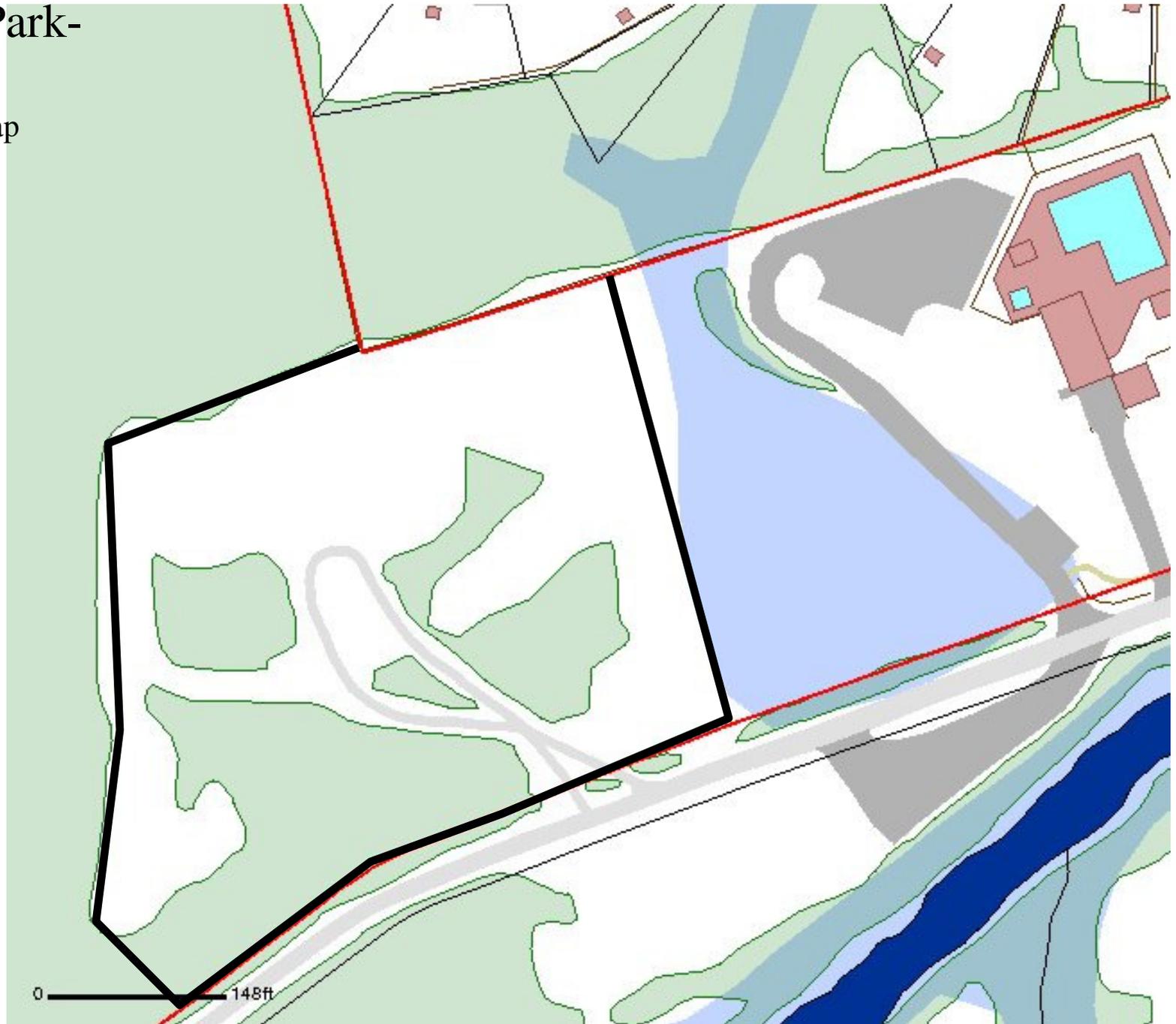
The bold black line  
shown equals  
approximately 310  
feet of fencing.





# Veterans Park- Option D Topography Map

The bold black line  
shown equals  
approximately 1,618  
feet of fencing.





# Installation Costs

- Tynan Park
  - Fencing \$8,665 (\$12.29p/f)
  - Trash Cans
  - Doggy Poop Bag Dispensers
- Marzalek Park
  - Fencing \$4,962 (\$13.23p/f)
  - Trash Cans
  - Doggy Poop Bag Dispensers
- Veterans Park Option A
  - Fencing \$21,827 (\$12.29p/f)
  - Trash Cans
  - Doggy Poop Bag Dispensers
- Veterans Park Option B
  - Fencing \$17,452 (\$12.29p/f)
  - Trash Cans
  - Doggy Poop Bag Dispensers
- Veterans Park Option C
  - Fencing \$4,102 (\$13.23p/f)
  - Trash Cans
  - Doggy Poop Bag Dispensers
- Veterans Park Option D
  - Fencing \$19,885 (\$12.29p/f)
  - Trash Cans
  - Doggy Poop Bag Dispensers

# Financing

- Requiring that only licensed dogs can use the park, the City could add a \$10 user fee that would need to be paid in conjunction with the dog license fee. These funds would be earmarked for establishing, maintain, and improving facilities for dogs and their owners could provide a dedicated income stream of \$20,000 per year, initially. If the unlicensed dogs all were licensed then the revenue from this source could be as high as \$60,000 per year.
- Fundraising could be achieved through the creation of a Responsible Dog Owners of Middletown. Possibly established as a new committee charged with raising awareness and raising funds for improvements or programs. Programs could be social or provide owners with training in dog handling. Fundraising ideas:
  - Selling engraved bricks for walkways or decorative walls.