

Submitted by: Mayor LaFrance, Assembly
Members Johnson, Silvers, and
Volland
Prepared by: Municipal Attorney
For reading: June 24, 2025

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA
AO No. 2025-74(S-1)

(NOTE: this substitute version is presented without legislative drafting markup, **except to the title, from the text of the original AO or any subsequent substitute version. It is written as a new ordinance. See the AM for a summary of changes.)*

AN ORDINANCE OF THE ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY AMENDING ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER 8.45 [05] [AND SECTIONS 8.45.015 AND 15.20.020] TO PROHIBIT CAMPING ON PROTECTED [PUBLIC] PREMISES AND PROHIBIT CONSTRUCTION ON PUBLIC LAND BY PROVIDING CRIMINAL PENALTIES [AND ENFORCEMENT PROTOCOLS CONSISTENT WITH CITY OF GRANTS PASS V. JOHNSON AND OTHER LAW].

WHEREAS, Anchorage Municipal Code prohibits unauthorized camping on public property, and provides for a civil abatement process to remove prohibited campsites;

WHEREAS, pursuant to AMC 15.20.020B.15.b., certain protected land uses such as schools, childcare centers, and major trail systems receive priority in the abatement process;

WHEREAS, in the past year, the Municipality has abated 28 prohibited encampments, including several large encampments that had become entrenched over the course of several years, such as the encampment at Davis Park and adjacent snow dump site in the Mountain View neighborhood;

WHEREAS, in the past year, the Municipality has increased staff capacity, improved inter-departmental coordination, and dedicated significant resources to addressing the root causes of homelessness; this includes making it easier to build housing, funding year-round shelter, increasing access to appropriate care to people in crisis, as well as holding people accountable for illegal and dangerous behavior;

WHEREAS, entrenched camps are not safe or beneficial for the people in them (who are often victimized) or the people around them (who suffer increased rates of crime and reduced access to public spaces);

WHEREAS, clearing these entrenched camps involves significant coordination between municipal departments, costs significantly more (in terms of municipal time, resources, and funds) and takes longer to complete;

WHEREAS, there are certain places within the Municipality where camping is always inappropriate or unsafe, such as playgrounds, schools, and other areas frequented by children; as well as streets, sidewalks, snow disposal sites, and trails;

1
2 **WHEREAS**, the Municipality has a strong interest in ensuring the safety of its
3 residents by reducing pedestrian injury and death in and along roadways;
4

5 **WHEREAS**, there is certain conduct that is always inappropriate and unsafe,
6 including the unauthorized construction of structures with hard sides, roofs, or walls
7 on public property;
8

9 **WHEREAS**, instituting criminal penalties for the most unsafe and inappropriate
10 camping activity and locations (1) sends a clear message to the community that
11 such unsafe and inappropriate activities will not be tolerated and (2) allows for more
12 rapid enforcement action where appropriate, while (3) managing the risk of litigation
13 challenges that would be expected to arise from broader legislation
14

15 **WHEREAS**, instituting criminal penalties for camping in unsafe and inappropriate
16 locations does not diminish the Municipality's ability to abate unsafe and
17 inappropriate camps in other locations, and in fact increases the Municipality's ability
18 to use civil abatement tools effectively and efficiently;
19

20 **WHEREAS**, quickly clearing camps through criminal warnings and enforcement
21 action will reduce the number of camps that become entrenched, thereby increasing
22 public safety for vulnerable individuals as well as the surrounding neighborhoods,
23 and reducing the drain on municipal resources; now, therefore,
24

25 THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY ORDAINS:
26

27 **Section 1.** Anchorage Municipal Code 8.45 is hereby amended to add the following
28 new section of code (*requiring no legislative formatting*):
29

30 **8.45.015 – Prohibited camping on protected premises.**
31

32 A. In addition to any other provision of this code, a person commits the
33 offense of prohibited camping on protected premises if the person
34 knowingly camps without permission or authority to do so on public
35 or private land under the following circumstances:

- 36 1. On or within 200 feet of paved greenbelt and major trail
37 systems (including but not limited to the Coastal Trail, Chester
38 Creek Trail, Ship Creek Trail, and Campbell Creek Trail),
39 measured from the paved edge of the trail;
40 2. On or in any street, road, highway, sidewalk, bridge, tunnel,
41 railroad track, snow disposal site, or runway;

- 1 3. Within 100 feet of the outer edge of:
- 2 a. any street, road, or highway, if the street, road, or highway
- 3 has a speed limit of 35 miles per hour or greater; or
- 4 b. any railroad track or runway; or

- 5 4. On or within 500 feet of:
- 6 a. The edge of any playground area;
- 7 b. The edge of any athletic field or other maintained (such as
- 8 groomed or mowed) open field on parkland;
- 9 c. The lot line of any parcel containing any school or licensed
- 10 childcare center; or
- 11 d. The lot line of any parcel containing any neighborhood
- 12 recreation center as defined in Title 21, licensed homeless
- 13 shelter as defined in chapter 16.125, or permit-based
- 14 campground.

15 B. For purposes of this section, distance shall be measured from the

16 nearest edge of the protected premises enumerated above to any

17 portion of the prohibited campsite.

18 C. Violation of this section is a class B misdemeanor, with the following

19 exceptions:

- 20 1. Violation of section 8.45.015A.4.a, 8.45.015A.4.c, or
- 21 8.45.015A.2 is a class A misdemeanor; and
- 22 2. Where a person is in violation of this section and refuses to
- 23 immediately comply with a warning from someone with
- 24 apparent authority, the violation is a class A misdemeanor.
- 25

Section 2. Anchorage Municipal Code section 8.45 is hereby amended to add the following new section (*requiring no legislative formatting*):

8.45.017 Prohibited construction on public land.

A. A person commits the offense of prohibited construction on public land if the person:

1. knowingly engages in the construction, in whole or in part, of any hard-walled, hard-roofed, or hard-floored structure of any kind on land owned or controlled by the Municipality of Anchorage or the State of Alaska without permission or authority to do so; or
2. in a manner designed to facilitate camping, knowingly excavates, removes, relocates, or adds dirt, sand, gravel, rocks, or similar material on land owned or controlled by the Municipality of Anchorage or the State of Alaska without permission or authority to do so.

B. A person attempts to commit the offense of prohibited construction on public land if the person:

1. knowingly possesses, on land owned or controlled by the Municipality of Anchorage or the State of Alaska, without permission or authority to do so, materials that could be used to construct in whole or in part any hard-walled, hard-roofed, or hard-floored structure of any kind, such as but not limited to lumber, pallets, boards, logs, bricks, cinder blocks, or any other hard construction material.

C. Violation of subsection A is a class A misdemeanor.

D. Violation of subsection B is a class B misdemeanor.

Section 3. Anchorage Municipal Code section 8.05.025 is hereby amended to add as follows (*the remainder of the section is not affected and therefore not set out*):

8.05.025 Minor offense fine schedule; misdemeanor penalty reference table; and state surcharge.

*** **

B. Misdemeanor offenses reference table.

Section	Description	Penalty	Penalty Section
*** **			
Chapter 8.45 TRESPASS			
8.45.010(A)(1)—(4)	Trespass	Class A	8.05.020H.1.
8.45.015(A)(1), (3); 8.45.015(A)(4)(b), (d)	Prohibited camping on protected premises	Class B	8.05.020H.2.
8.45.015(A)(4)(a), (c); 8.45.015(A)(2)	Prohibited camping on protected premises	Class A	8.05.020H.1.
8.45.017A	Prohibited construction on public land	Class A	8.05.020H.1.
8.45.017B	Prohibited construction on public land- attempt	Class B	8.05.020H.2.
8.45.020(A)(1), (2)	Unauthorized entry	Class B	8.05.020H.2.
*** **			

*** **

(AO No. 2014-42, § 1, 6-21-14; AO No. 2015-7, § 2, 2-24-15; AO No. 2015-84, § 2, 9-24-15; AO No. 2015-87, § 2, 9-24-15; AO No. 2015-123(S), § 2, 11-10-15; EO No. 2016-1, § 1, 7-12-16; AO No. 2016-83(S), § 1, 7-26-16; AO No. 2016-114, § 1, 12-15-16; AO No. 2017-156, § 1, 12-5-17; AO No. 2018-34(S), § 4, 7-26-18; AO No. 2019-25, § 2, 3-5-19; AO No. 2023-100(S), § 1, 11-7-23)

Section 4. Anchorage Municipal Code section 15.20.020 is hereby amended to read as follows (*the remainder of the section is not affected and therefore not set out*):

15.20.020 Public nuisances prohibited; enumeration.

*** **

B. Public nuisances include, but are not limited to, the following acts and conditions:

*** **

15. *Prohibited campsites.* A prohibited campsite is an area where one or more persons are camping on public land in violation of **chapter[SECTION] 8.45[.010]**, chapter 25.70, or any other provision of this Code. A prohibited campsite is subject to abatement by the municipality. The municipal official

responsible for an abatement action may accomplish the abatement with the assistance of a contractor, association or organization. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Code, the following procedure may be used to abate a prohibited campsite:

* * * * *

(GAAB 16.68.110, 18.15.020, 18.15.030, 18.20.030, 18.20.060; CAC 8.10.020, 8.10.050; AO No. 113-76; AO No. 78-48; AO No. 79-63; AO No. 93-173(S), § 3, 2-24-94; AO No. 95-42, § 3, 3-23-95; AO No. 2001-145(S-1), § 12, 12-11-01; AO No. 2003-130, § 4, 10-7-03; AO No. 2009-83(S), § 2, 7-7-09; AO No. 2010-43(S), § 1, 6-22-10; AO No. 2010-63, § 1, 9-14-10; AO No. 2011-52, § 1, 4-26-11; AO No. 2016-81(S), § 2, 8-25-16; AO No. 2017-119(S), § 2, 11-9-17; AO No. 2017-130(S), § 1, 12-5-17; AO No. 2018-53(S), § 1, 6-26-18; AO No. 2018-61, § 1, 7-31-18; AO No. 2018-118, § 2, 1-1-19; AO No. 2019-94(S), § 2, 8-6-19; AO No. 2024-55(S), § 1, 5-21-24)

Section 3. This ordinance shall be effective 7 days from the date of passage and approval by the Assembly.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Assembly this _____ day of _____, 2025.

Chair of the Assembly

ATTEST:

Municipal Clerk



MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE

Assembly Memorandum

No. AM 531-2025

Meeting Date: June 24, 2025

From: MAYOR

Subject: AN ORDINANCE OF THE ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY AMENDING ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER 8.45 [05] [AND SECTIONS 8.45.015 AND 15.20.020] TO PROHIBIT CAMPING ON PROTECTED [PUBLIC] PREMISES AND PROHIBIT CONSTRUCTION ON PUBLIC LAND BY PROVIDING CRIMINAL PENALTIES [AND ENFORCEMENT PROTOCOLS CONSISTENT WITH CITY OF GRANTS PASS V. JOHNSON AND OTHER LAW].

This ordinance provides a targeted legal mechanism that will allow the Municipality to rapidly intervene and help prevent the most unsafe and inappropriate camping on public land. This version takes a balanced, practical approach that minimizes legal risks to the Municipality and can be implemented effectively with the existing resources.

At the very beginning of my term as Mayor, I asked the Municipal Attorney and Anchorage Police Department Chief to identify any legal changes they needed to protect public safety. This ordinance aligns with other public safety improvements we've made, including recruitment efforts that produced the first full Police Academy in many years, fully staffing the Municipal Prosecutor's office, and recently passed legislation that imposed meaningful penalties for unsafe fires.

This ordinance adds criminal penalties for certain camping activity and locations, giving us the ability to more quickly and efficiently deploy the Police Department to address camping in unsafe and inappropriate areas. It supplements existing legal tools, including the civil abatement process, which will still apply Muni-wide, as well as trespass law for previously-abated areas and private property.

It is never appropriate for someone to set up a prohibited campsite near playgrounds, schools, childcare centers, neighborhood recreation centers, and other areas frequently occupied by children. It is also critical to keep streets and trails clear. Anchorage has recently seen record numbers of pedestrian deaths, emphasizing the importance of keeping a safe buffer zone on and around our roadways and other frequently traveled thoroughfares. This ordinance will help deter people from setting up camps in or near these safety zones, and it will allow for swifter intervention to prevent large encampments from taking root.

1 And it is never appropriate for individuals to claim an area of public land indefinitely
2 with the unauthorized construction of structures. No one has the right to build semi-
3 permanent and dangerous buildings on public land. This ordinance makes clear
4 that hard-sided, hard-walled, and hard-roofed structures will not be tolerated on
5 public property.

6
7 This provision will help prevent camps in the Municipality from becoming
8 entrenched. Entrenched camps, like the encampments at Davis Park and the
9 nearby snow dump, become dangerous, and they are significantly more expensive
10 to clear, requiring substantial cross-departmental coordination and lengthy clean-
11 ups. By preventing camps from becoming entrenched in priority areas, this
12 ordinance will help to reduce the costs of abatement.

13
14 This ordinance supports the administration's balanced approach toward
15 addressing homelessness: The Municipality is providing a safety net of shelter and
16 services, enhancing crisis care and outreach efforts, enforcing laws and removing
17 unsafe and unauthorized camps, and improving access to housing.

18
19 Public parks, trails, and spaces must be safe and accessible for all. Encampments
20 are not safe – not for the people living in them, and not for people nearby. This
21 ordinance, like the civil abatement process, is not a solution to homelessness, but
22 it is a necessary means to protect public safety.

23
24 A map is attached for informational purposes only. It has not been verified for
25 completeness or accuracy and has no legal effect.

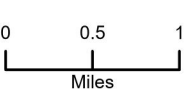
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27 **Summary of changes:** This substitute version (1) replaces the whereas clauses
28 of the original ordinance and (2) creates two different new misdemeanor offenses
29 (prohibited camping on protected premises and prohibited construction on public
30 property), instead of creating a single new misdemeanor offense in Title 8
31 (prohibited camping on public premises).

32
33
34 **There are no anticipated economic effects and therefore pursuant to AMC**
35 **2.30.053B.1., no Summary of Economic Effects is attached to this ordinance.**

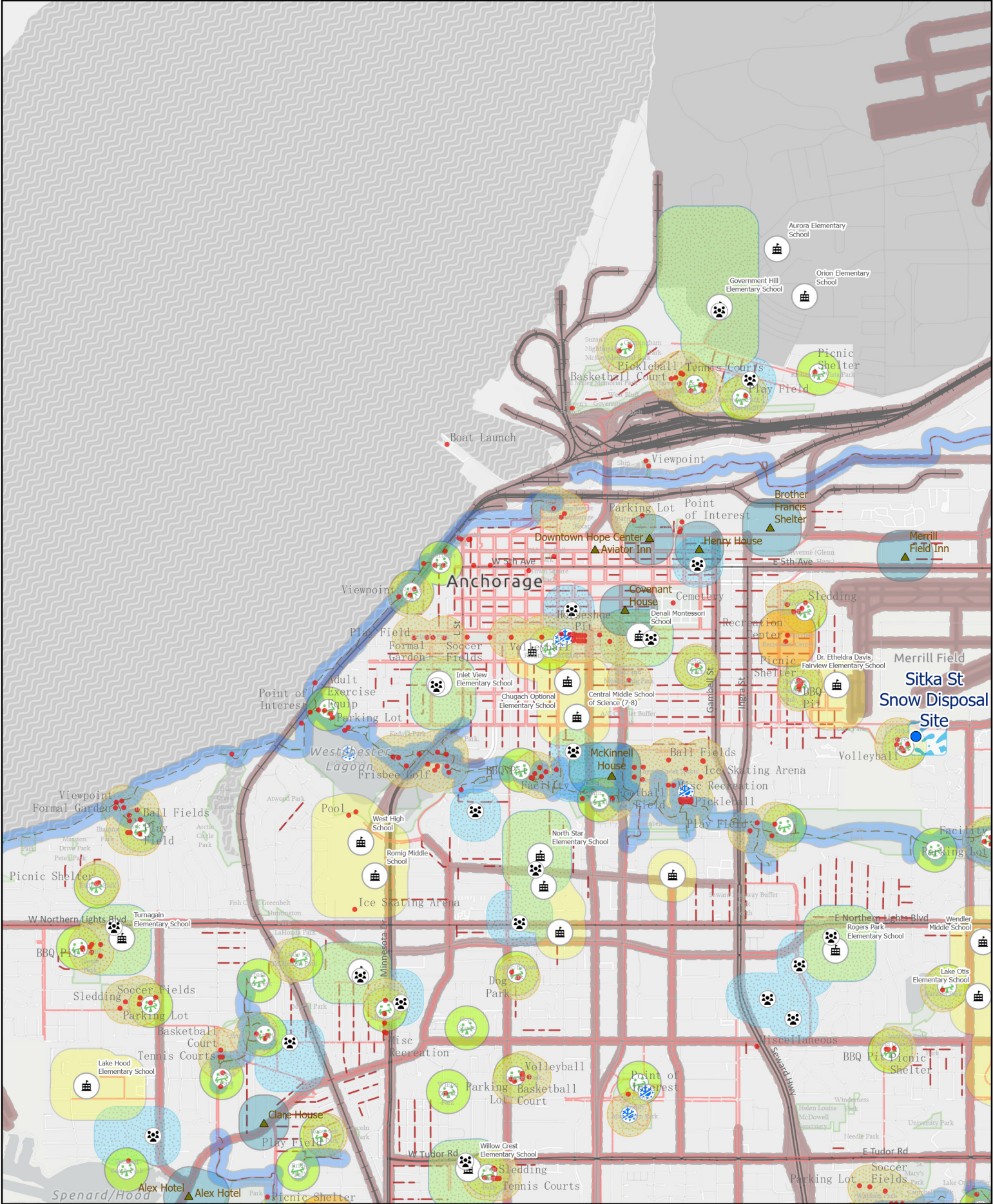
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37 Prepared by: Department of Law
38 Approved by: Eva R. Gardner, Municipal Attorney
39 Concur: Ona R. Brause, Director, Office of Management and
40 Budget
41 Concur: Sean Case, Chief, Anchorage Police Department
42 Concur: William D. Falsey, Chief Administrative Officer
43 Concur: Rebecca A. Windt Pearson, Municipal Manager
44 Concur: Dennis A. Wheeler, Municipal Prosecutor
45 Respectfully submitted: Suzanne LaFrance, Mayor

46
47 Attachment: Map

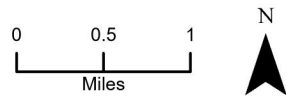
AO 2025-74(S-_)
Proposed Title 8 Restricted Camping Areas



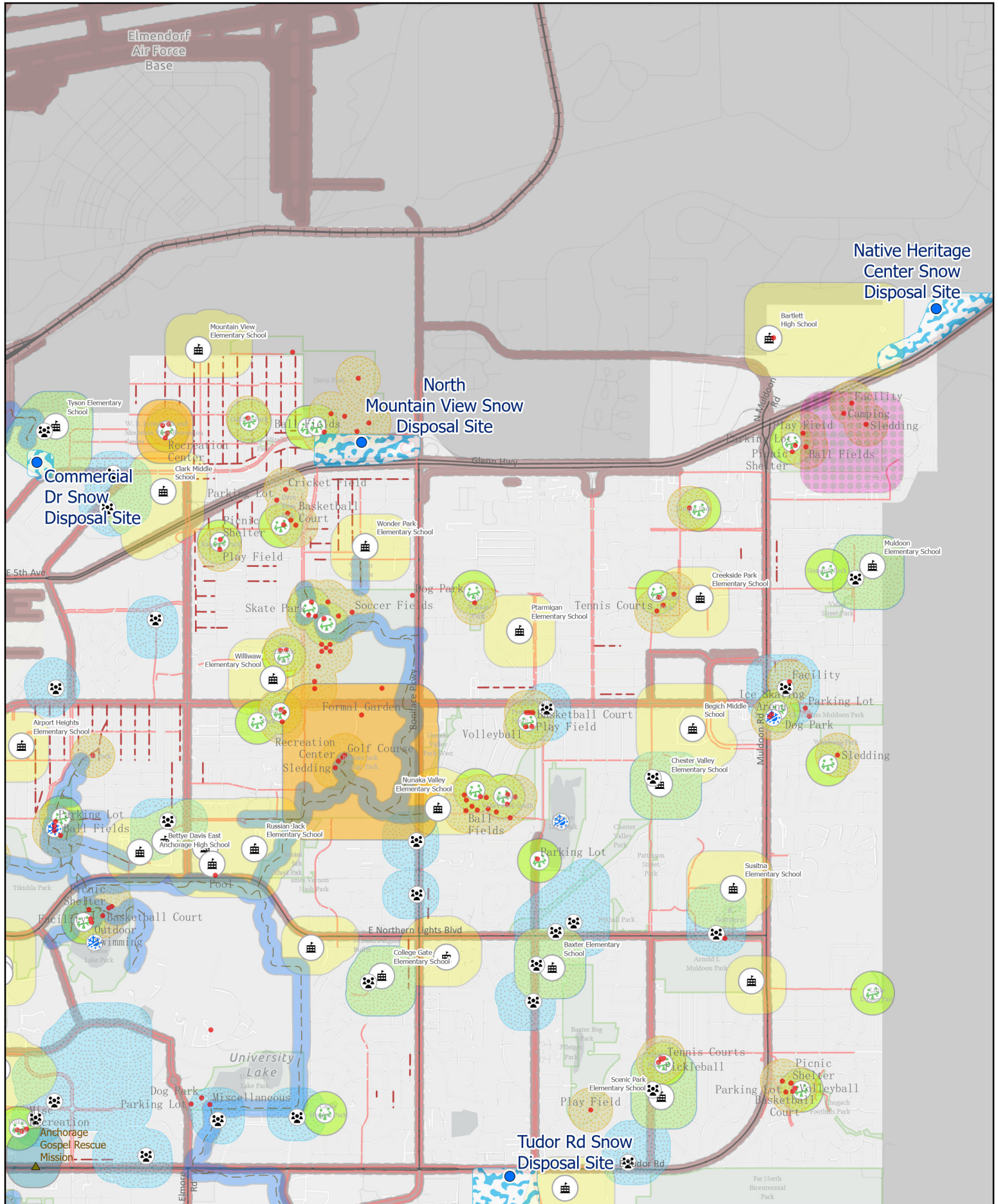
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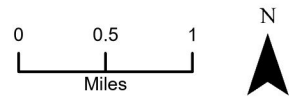
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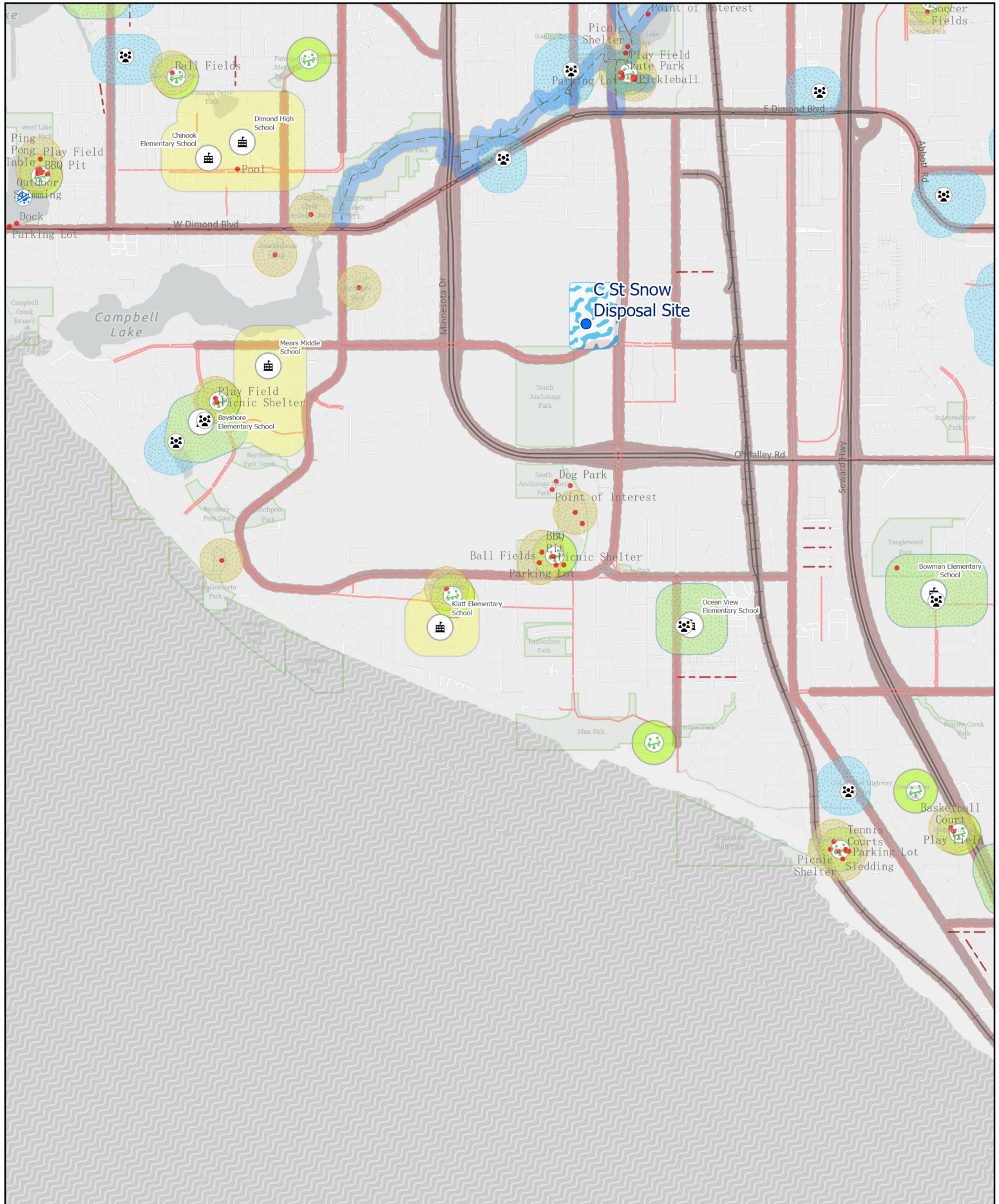
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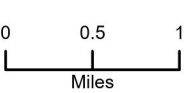
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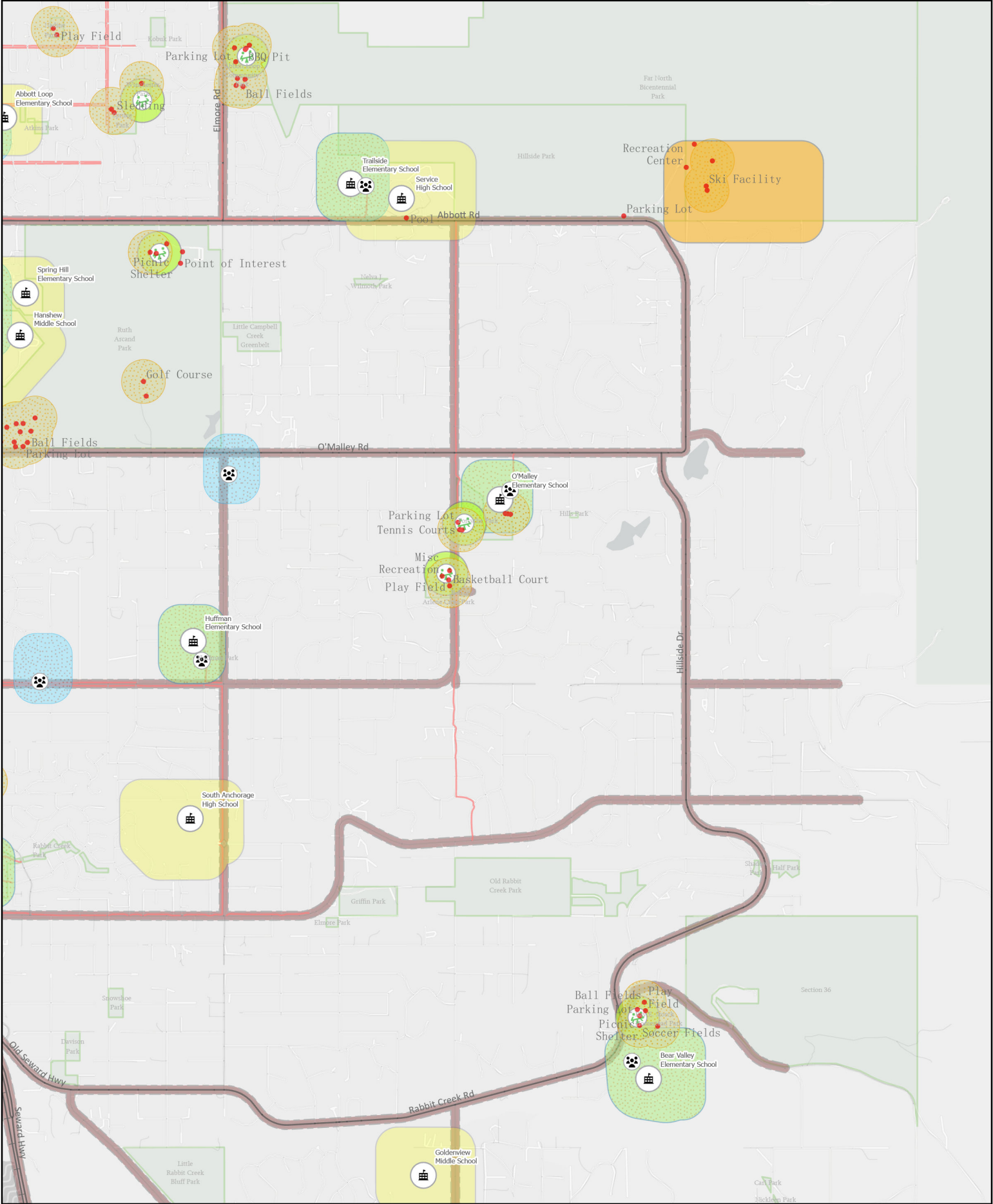
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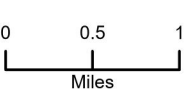
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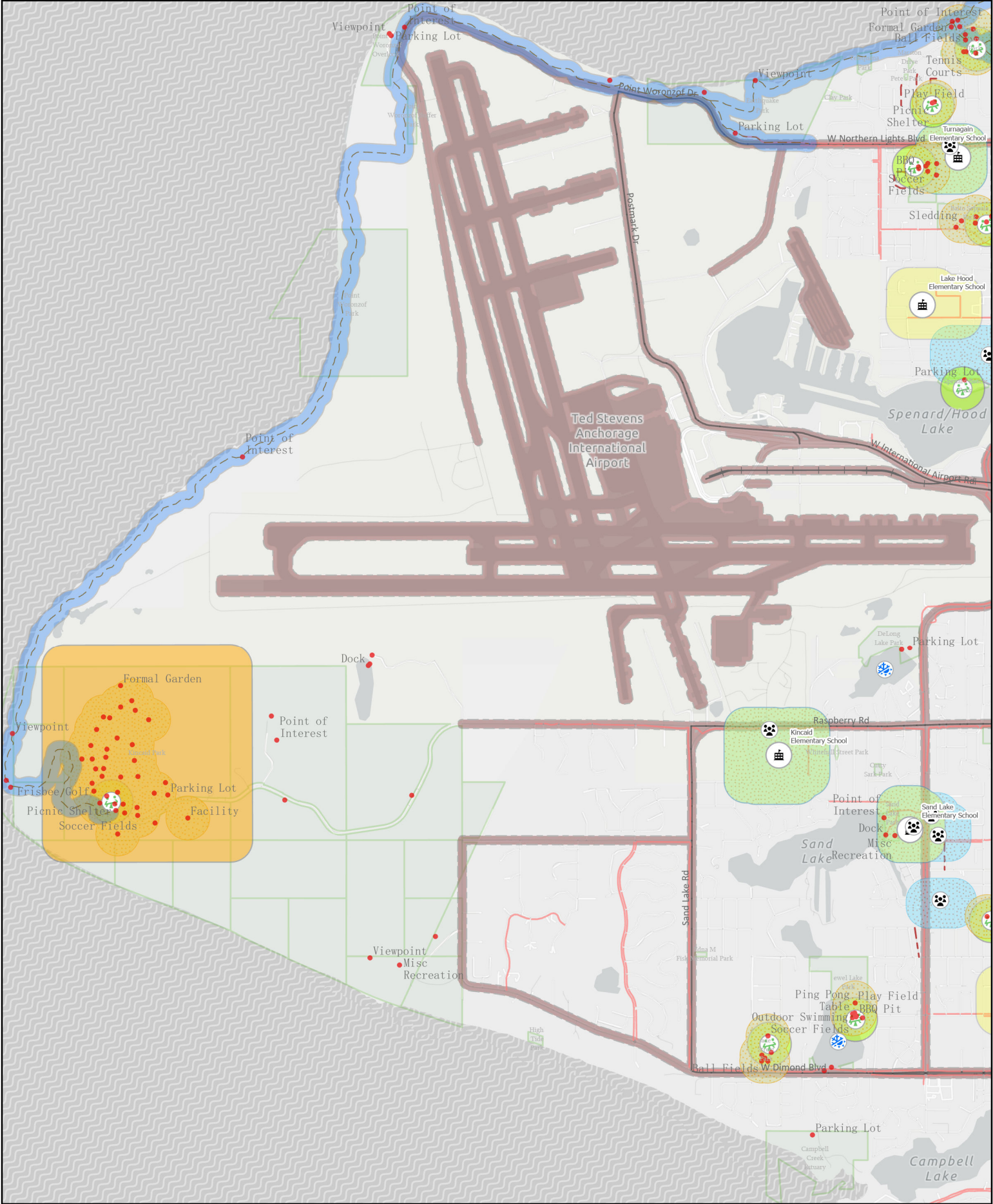
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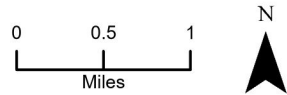
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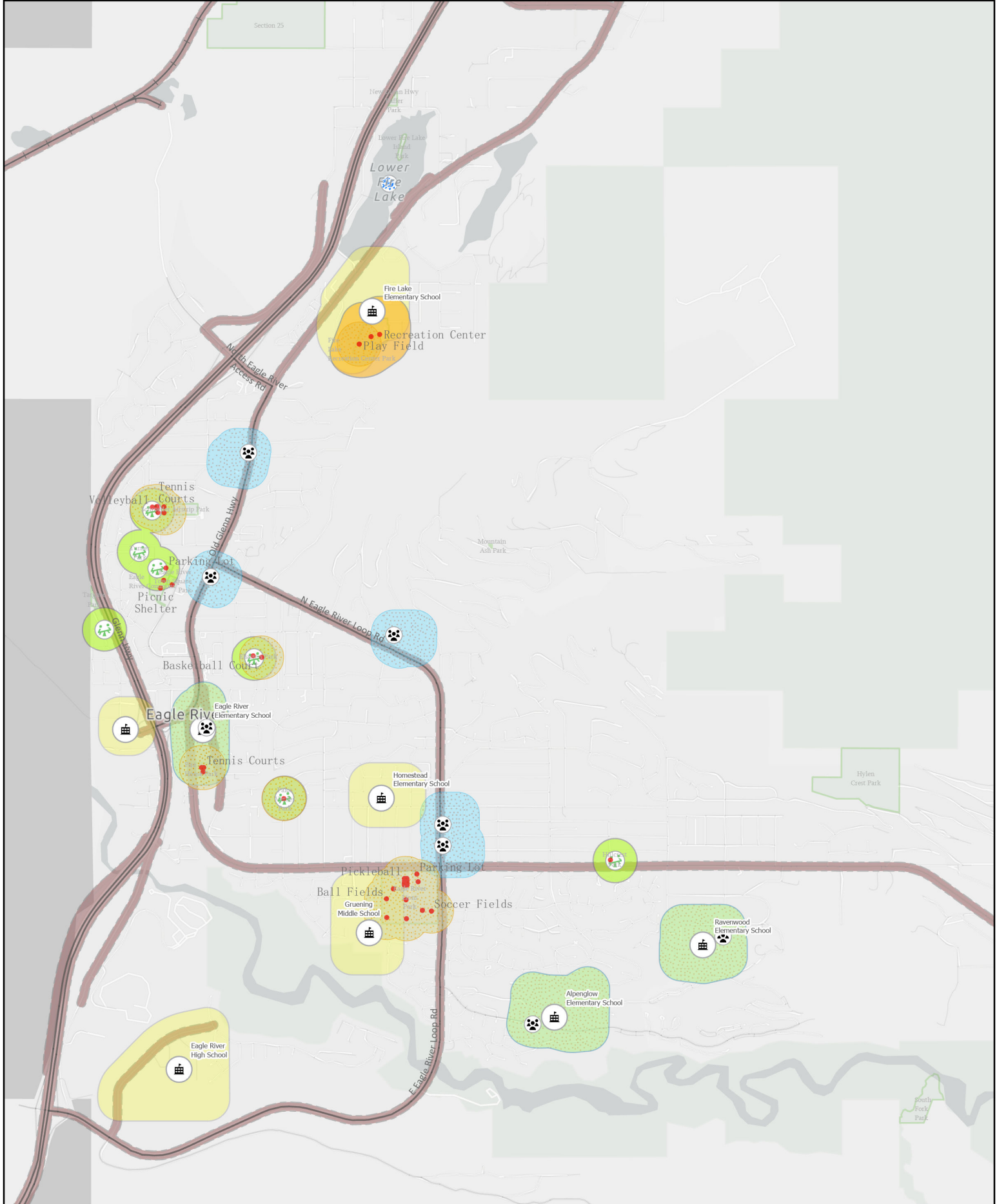
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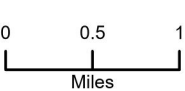
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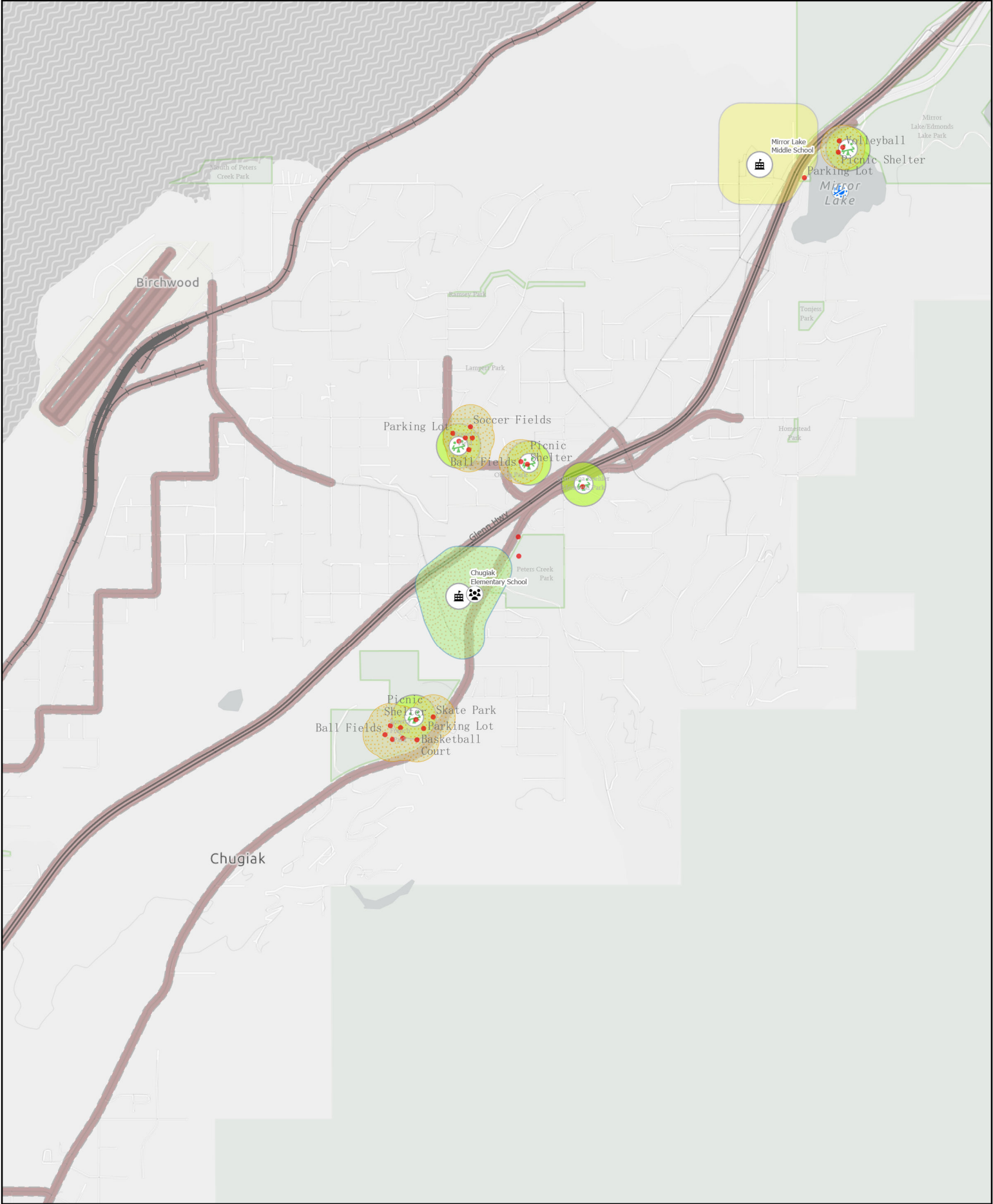
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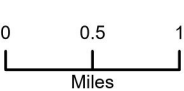
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