

by Joe Riddell August 2026

METHOD: A 1999 survey map by William O'Hara showed the northern boundary of the Reserve based on an 1885 subdivision plat. I copied onto paper with a grid of small squares the area of the survey map showing the Y subdivision (outlined here in orange) and O'Hara's Reserve boundary (a dashed line) running through the subdivision. The area in conflict is colored yellow. I then counted, for each row of the grid, the number of small grid squares within the Y land not in conflict and the number of squares in the area in conflict. Those are the long columns of numbers on the left and right sides of the map/worksheet. They total 197.1 squares not in conflict and 133.7 squares in conflict. Altogether there are 330.8 squares. The portion in conflict is 133.7 divided by 330.8, which equals .404, or about 40% in round numbers. This works out to a little less than 2 acres of the 4.80 acres in the subdivision. As explained below, this area now belongs to the State of Texas.

BACKGROUND DETAILS: The YMCA Town Lake Subdivision as platted in 1988 contains 4.80 acres. Its southern and western boundaries are based on a 1916 survey by O. H. Metcalfe. Due to questions about Metcalfe's work, the City hired an independent surveyor, William O'Hara, to study the situation. O'Hara's 1999 report explains his opinion that the Metcalfe boundary line is in the wrong position. O'Hara's survey map shows that the west end of the YMCA subdivision and a strip along its south side are inside the boundary of Sand Beach Reserve. The Reserve is public land set aside for public purposes by the Republic of Texas in 1840. The State sold the Reserve to the City in 1945, requiring that it be used for public purposes and that any portion of it later sold by the City would revert to the State. Having bought a 5-acre tract from the railroad, the City actually owned, from 1961 to 1963, the land that became the Y subdivision. When the City sold the tract to the Boy Scouts in 1963, the Reserve land within that tract reverted to State ownership.

