

Outside Citywide

Outside Citywide is an interdepartmental initiative to envision and create an integrated, equitable, and inspiring public space network for a thriving, green Seattle.

SEP. 9, 2019

The Challenge

Public Space is critical infrastructure for a thriving city.

A vibrant urban public space network is necessary for human, environmental, cultural, and economic prosperity.

Health + Wellbeing



- Environmental Justice
- Recreation + Exercise
- Play + Child Development
- Mental Health
- Food Security

Environment + Ecology



- Healthy Watersheds
- Habitat
- Carbon Sequestration
- Flood Protection
- Public Safety

Society + Culture

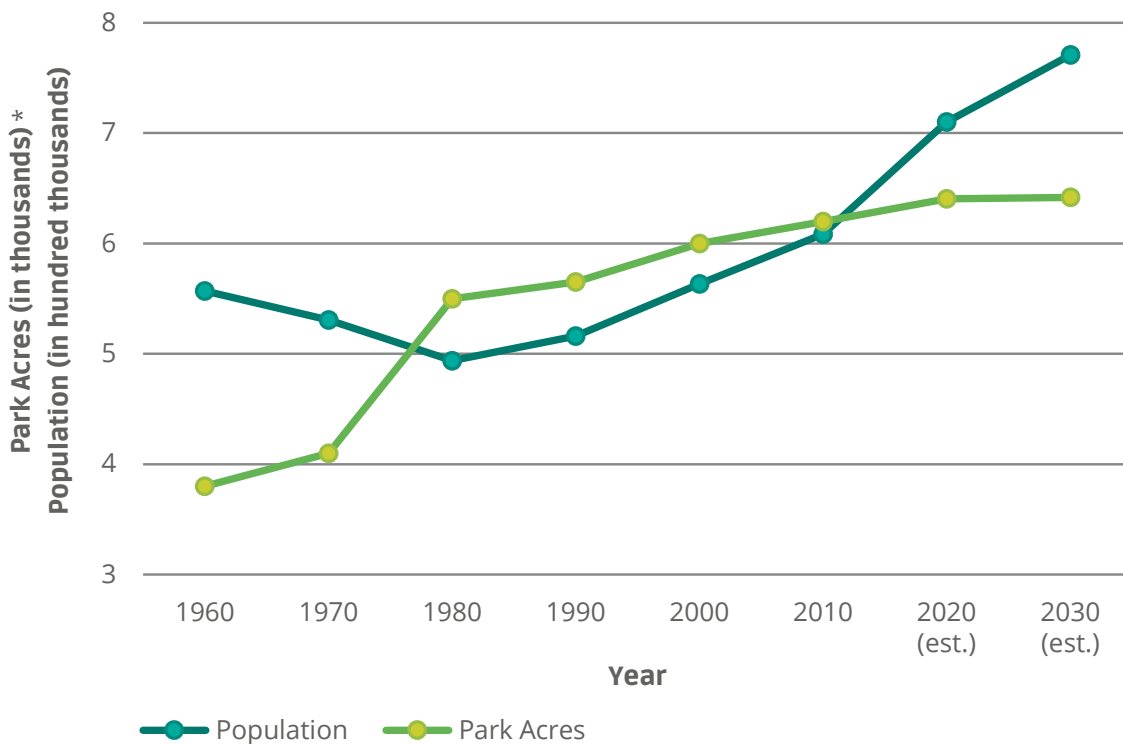


- Economy + Small Businesses
- Democracy + Political Expression
- Arts, Festivals, + Performance
- Social Cohesion
- Strong Communities

However, our public space system can't keep up with the growth of our population.

In the past, the City has focused on an acquisitions-based strategy to grow our public space network. However, with our rising population density and land values, this single-pronged strategy is no longer feasible.

Park System & Population Growth Since 1960



* The current adopted SPR level of service is 8 acres per 1000 people.

The Vision



We can expand public space by expanding our thinking.

Our public space network can and must continue to provide the full range of critical benefits to our communities. This will require a more innovative and collaborative approach guided by three overarching principles:



- Create
- Expand
- Repurpose



- Stack benefits
- Activate
- Integrate



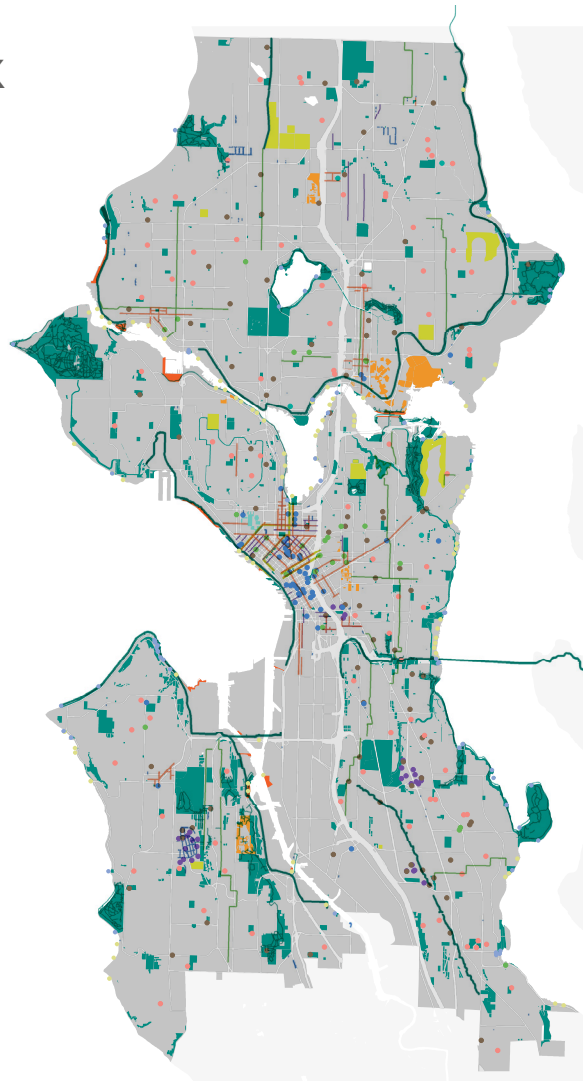
- Invite
- Stitch together
- Relate

3 Key Strategies for 3 Key Problems

Seattle's current public space network is robust and diverse...

SEATTLE'S PUBLIC SPACE NETWORK

- Seattle Parks and Recreation
- Seattle Center
- Port of Seattle and Army Corps of Engineers parks
- SPU public space
- Seattle Housing Authority parks
- Public schoolyards
- Campus green spaces
- Cemeteries and private golf courses
- P-Patches
- Shoreline street ends
- Boat launches and ramps
- Privately Owned Public Space (POPS)
- Parklets, Streateries and Pavement to Parks
- Green stormwater infrastructure in the right of way
- Regional Trail
- Local Trail (at least 1 mile long)
- Neighborhood Greenway
- Green Street
- Streetscape Concept Plan
- Urban Marked Trail
- Other ROW



But it is also:

1. Inequitably distributed



2. Not being used to its fullest potential



3. Fragmented

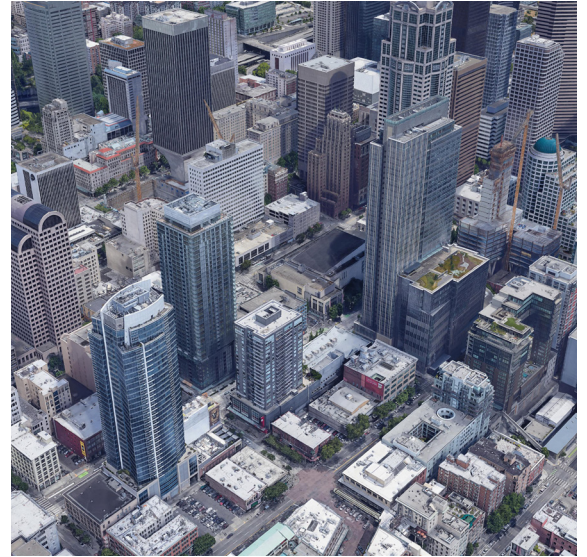




GROW

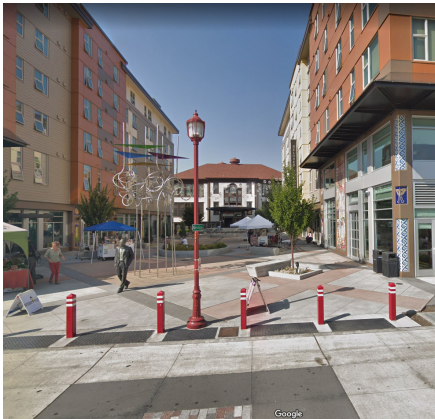
Distributional Inequity

Some neighborhoods have an abundance of beautiful and well-maintained public spaces, while other neighborhoods have are in need.



PROBLEM

STRATEGY



Create new public space through public/private partnerships and strategic acquisitions in underserved and high need areas.

Expand existing spaces to enhance usability.

Repurpose right-of-way and other assets to create more public space.



Improve

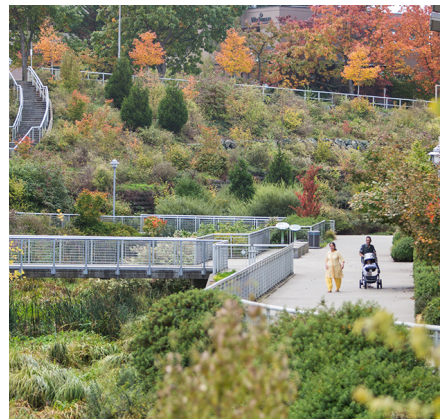
PROBLEM

Underutilized space

Many public spaces in Seattle are not living up to their full potential due to a lack of investment, maintenance, or activation.



STRATEGY



Stack benefits to get more out of underutilized public land, such as blacktop school playgrounds.

Activate and improve underloved public spaces by partnering with community.

Integrate infrastructure and public space to get public space benefits out of our utility and transportation investments, and water quality and mobility benefits from public space.



Connect

PROBLEM

Fragmentation

Siloed planning and delivery of public space across a large number of departments and agencies has led to a network that is often disjointed and hard to navigate.



STRATEGY



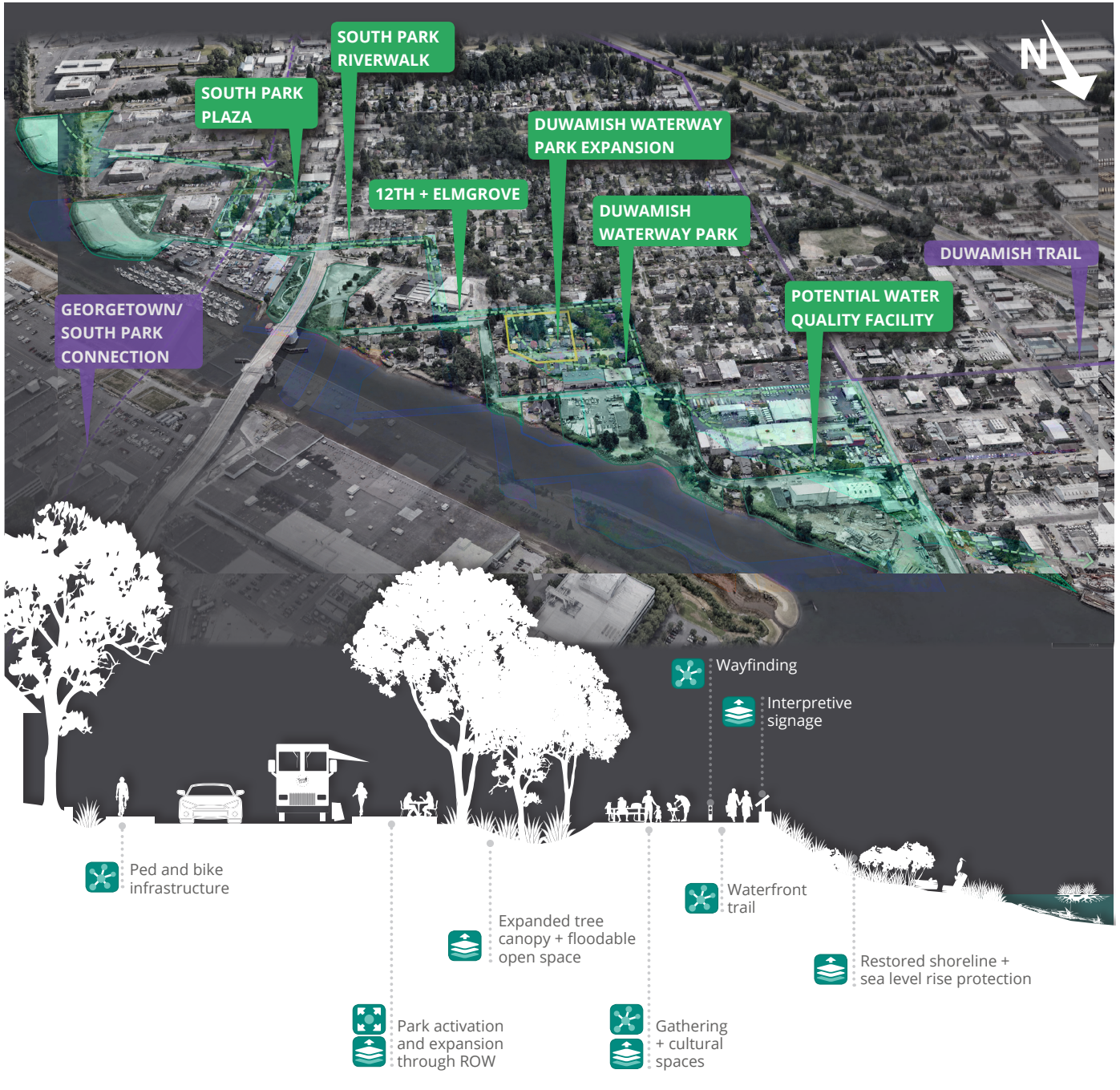
Invite people outside through safe, green networks that lead to both local and regional public spaces.

Stitch together habitat corridors, trail systems, open space, and shorelines to support both human and wildlife connectivity.

Relate public spaces to community needs through culturally-informed design and programming.

Bringing the Vision to Life in South Park

Outside Citywide has been refining these strategies by stitching together new and existing public spaces in South Park to form an integrated network in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.



FUTURE SOUTH PARK RIVERWALK

Catalytic Implementation



Partnering with the Duwamish Valley Youth Corps, we are teaching local youth about urban planning and design, and supporting them to envision and create the future Riverwalk.

The youth begin by designing and painting a mural on a segment of the roadway by the largest existing shoreline public space. This artwork is intended to catalyze work to create the future connections along the Riverwalk while also bolstering neighborhood identity and safety.

Public Space Priority Areas

By analyzing what areas of the city are underserved by existing public spaces as well as which communities are most in need of the benefits that public spaces provide, Outside Citywide has identified priority areas across the city for public space expansions and improvements.

Access to Public Space



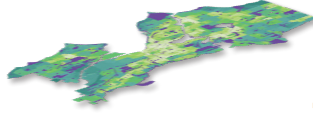
Race + Social Equity



Health Outcomes

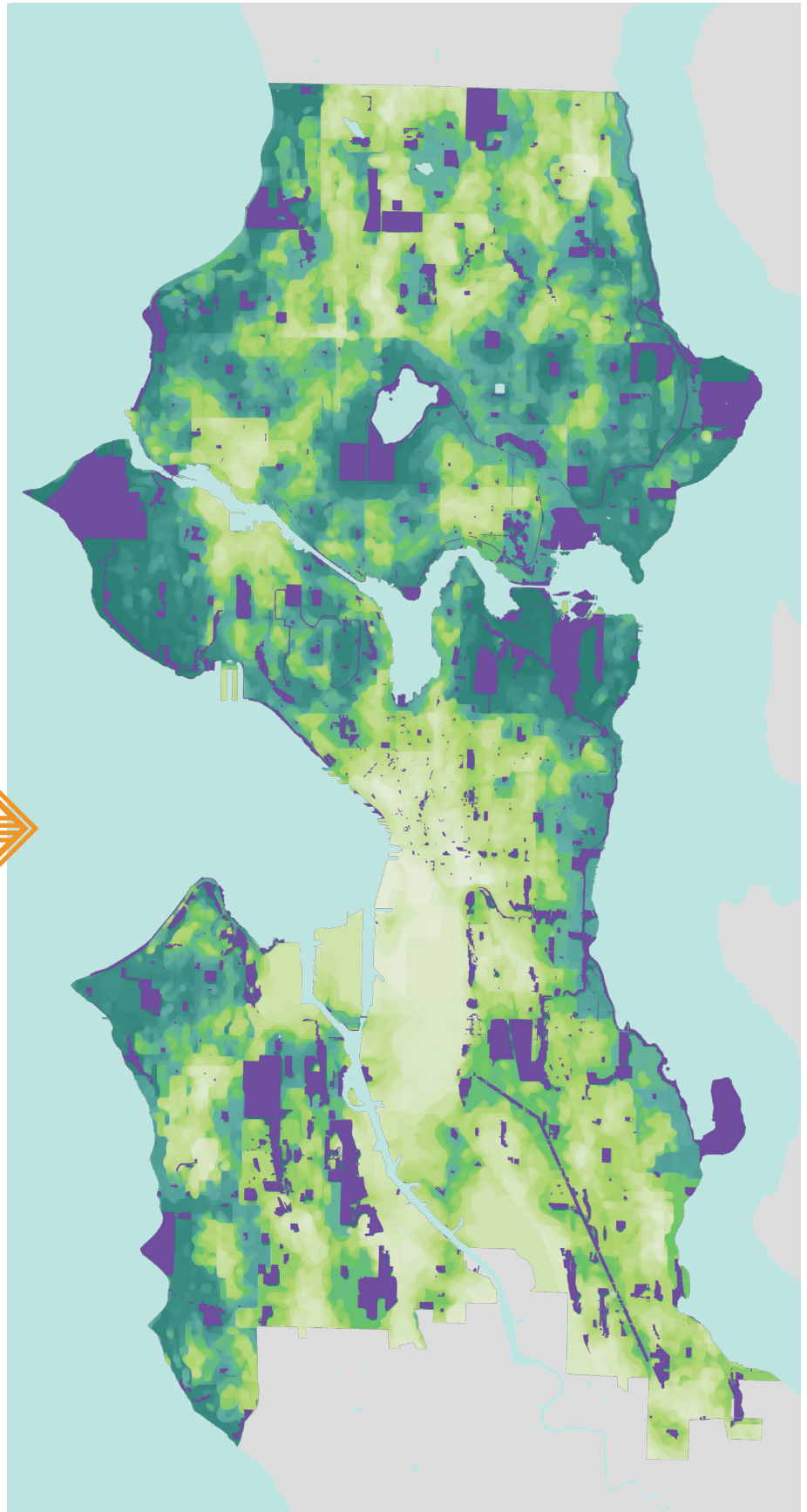
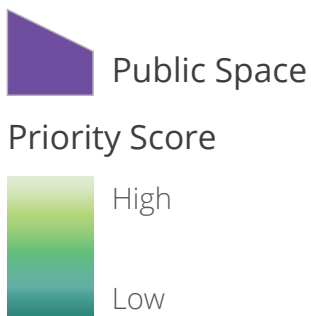


Growth + Density



EXPLORE THE MAPS AT:

[Tinyurl.com/OutsideCitywide](https://tinyurl.com/OutsideCitywide)



Specific Opportunities

Cross-Sector Collaboration



Engaging Youth



Partnering with Artists



Parks next to Affordable Housing



Green Career Pathways



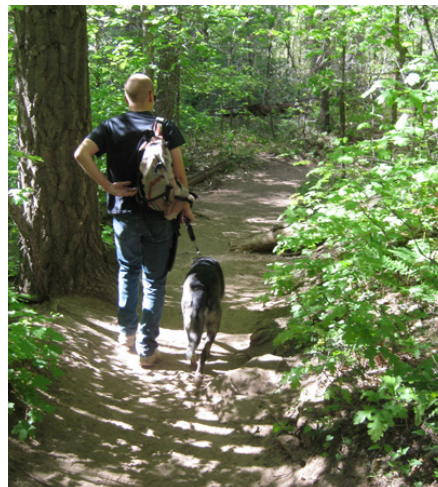
Community Co-Ownership



Greening School Yards



Restoration + Trails in Greenbelts



Public Green Roofs



The Time is Now.

Seattle has a proud legacy of innovation and collaboration to deliver high quality public space, from the early planning of the Olmsted Brothers to the Forward Thrust bonds of the late 1960s to today's work to create a new Waterfront for All.

But with unprecedented growth and the challenges we face from climate change, increased density and growing inequity, we need to recommit to ensuring excellence in our public spaces and to creating an emerald city where everyone can thrive.

We can expand our public space network by expanding our thinking. We can grow, improve and connect our open space assets in new, thoughtful and creative ways. We can work in partnership—with communities, with the private and nonprofit sectors, and across multiple city and county agencies—to leverage our assets and create a future that is worthy of this place we love.

But we cannot wait. The opportunities we have now will diminish over time, and the costs will only increase. The time to act is now.



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