



MEMORANDUM

Date: October 20, 2016
To: Board of Park Commissioners
From: Christina Hirsch
Subject: Seattle Park District communications efforts

Requested Board Action

Informational briefing.

Project or Policy Description and Background

Seattle Park District communications efforts: The voter-approved Seattle Park District supports Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) in numerous ways with a stable, long-term source of funding for department operations and maintenance. This good news for the department also comes with heightened expectations and accountability for getting our work done. A significant part of that accountability is letting people know how and for what purpose their tax dollars are being spent.

We will present to the Park Board on the strategies and tactics we have developed for communicating Park District progress and accomplishments to a variety of internal and external audiences.

Additional Information

Below is a broad overview of the strategies and tactics we have developed for communicating Park District updates, information, successes and stories to internal and external audiences.

Strategies

- Strong use of storytelling to highlight how people are participating in and benefitting from Park District activities;
- Frequent use of social media to carry messages;
- Use of multimedia, particularly photos, video and infographics to convey messages;
- Branding of “look and feel” of Park District materials so people can easily recognize a Park District project or activity;
- Proactive media strategies with a focus on engaging diverse/ethnic media outlets;
- Involvement of major partners to help deliver key messages and updates through their communication channels;

- Regional meetings to unveil major projects;
- Involvement of Mayor, City Councilmembers, Superintendent at Park District-related public events;
- Use of Mayor's "Seattle @WORK: open houses to inform and update people about the Park District;
- Regularly scheduled written progress reports to various audiences through various means; AND
- Regularly scheduled briefings to various audiences about Park District progress.

Tactics

External Communication

- Storytelling template and training for frontline staff to gather stories and quotes on Park District activities, which the Communications Office will use to craft blog, newsletter and social media stories showing impact.
- Weekly Facebook posts highlighting Park District successes, with heavy use of before-and-after pictures, testimonials, and vignettes; use of #SeattleParkDistrict hashtag;
- Packaging of key messages and sample social media posts for SPR social media editors to post monthly content across community center and program social media pages, and for Superintendents Twitter page;
- Bi-weekly Twitter updates highlighting Park District accomplishments, with heavy use of photos and infographics;
- Bi-monthly blog stories highlighting Park District beneficiaries and success stories;
- Monthly Park District stories featured in Explore More, SPR's external newsletter;
- Quarterly reports and annual report, supported by blog and social media;
- News releases for specific projects, programs, activities;
- Pitching stories on certain projects, programs, activities to print and electronic media, with a focus on engaging ethnic and diverse media outlets;
- Development of branded Park District FAQ page, collateral material, and power point presentation for use at meetings and public events;
- Public meetings for projects or acquisitions in affected neighborhoods;
- Briefing for Mayor's Office, City Council, District Board, Oversight Committee, Board of Park Commissioners;
- Other updates provided by staff at public meetings, Mayor walking tours, department public "listening tour" open houses and public meetings;
- Seattle Channel coverage; AND
- Regularly updated website.

Internal Communication

- Regular communication with employees through Superintendent blog and internal newsletter;
- Quarterly internal newsletter focused on how the Park District helps SPR address "big topics" such as equity, access, and livability in Seattle.
- All-staff emails to announce major milestones and successes;

- Briefing papers to various audiences: Mayor's Office, City Council, Board of Park Commissioners, Park District Board, Oversight Committee;
- Information shared by Superintendent and Division Directors with staff at meeting and in informal settings;
- Information communicated at staff meetings including all-staff meetings and retreats;
- Regular standing section on Park District implementation in Mayor's Weekly Report;
- Sharepoint site to collect and share Park District information; AND
- Recognition Guide and messaging toolkits distribution; trainings for staff.

Outreach

- Directive from Mayor on collaboration with DON and other department
- Public Involvement Policy and signage with Park District logo
- Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement – 6 strategies and DON survey
- Going to the community – examples – Lake City and Ballard play areas
- Translation – Brighton
- Using more surveys

Additional Information

Park District Website: <http://www.seattle.gov/seattle-park-district>

Please contact Christina Hirsch: Christina.Hirsch@seattle.gov or Karen O'Connor: Karen.oconnor@seattle.gov