December 8, 2014

Seattle Parks and Recreation
Performance management work plan

Contents

Introduction

Seattle Parks and Recreation (Parks) will begin to develop a department-wide performance management system in 2015. Parks' mission is to provide welcoming and safe opportunities to play, learn, contemplate and build community, and to promote responsible stewardship of the land. To fulfill this mission, Parks works to achieve four ultimate outcomes: healthy people, healthy environment, financial sustainability, and strong communities. These outcomes will underlie the department's performance management framework. The goal of the performance management framework will be to determine if Parks' actions and outputs lead to the outcomes the Department seeks.

Development of the performance management system will be a continuous, iterative process. The Department will first develop indicators of the ultimate outcomes, and then initiate development of lower-level outcomes and accompanying measures. By measuring outcomes, this process seeks to build a holistic view of Parks' performance, rather than simply counting outputs. The Department will also prepare an annual public report, based on information available from the performance management system.

There are two major components to this work plan: developing a fully integrated, "cascading" performance management system, and developing an annual public report. This process will begin in 2015 with initial work on the performance management system; information from the first round of data collection will make up the initial public report, subsequent iterations of which will become more robust as additional pieces of the performance management system come online.

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Developing a "cascading" performance management system

With passage of the Seattle Park District, $200,000 will be allocated in 2015 to consultant services to assist the Department in developing a performance management system. Parks will create a "Results Team", operating under the Superintendent, to oversee implementation of the performance management system. The Results Team will begin a series of actions in 2015 that will begin the performance management process potentially including a comprehensive baseline performance audit.

The Results Team will lead a department-wide process to develop outcome-based measures for every level of work. This intensive process will begin with Parks' executive team, and continue to "cascade" through different levels of the department.[1] At each level, the Results Team will work with staff to clearly define outcomes to be accomplished, and to develop measures of those outcomes.[2] The Results Team will be responsible for creating a language and culture in the Department that supports performance management, so it is important the Team uses positive language ("staff success" rather than "staff accountability") and makes the process as supportive and understanding of staff as possible. At each level, this continuous process will include four phases:

1. Definition: Staff teams define the desired outcomes from their work, and work with the Results Team to categorize the outcomes under Parks' four ultimate outcomes: Healthy People, Healthy Environment, Financial Sustainability, and Strong Communities.

- *Actions:* participating staff will submit a project charter to the Results Team defining goals, roles, responsibilities, expectations, and timelines. The Results Team works with participating staff to ensure the project charter is adequate. Participating staff then submit the outcomes or outputs sought to the Result Team, which works with staff to align lower-level outcomes or outputs with higher-level or ultimate outcomes.

2. Development: Staff work with the Results Team to develop measures of their chosen outcomes. During this phase, it will be critical for the Results Team to delegate responsibility to individuals that work with divisions, programs, units, and eventually employees to develop outcomes and measures.

- *Actions:* participating staff will submit draft measures of their chosen outcomes to their Results Team representative. The Results Team will work with participating staff to assess each measure's feasibility, including assessing cost, risk, accuracy, or other variables.

3. Data collection: Staff collect data on metrics and use the data to develop performance targets.

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[1] See Attachment B for a timeline of "cascading" outcome and measurement development.
[2] As the process moves from department level to employee/work unit level, the Results Team's direct involvement will become less pronounced. The Results Team will select knowledgeable staff at each outcome level to branch down and assist staff in developing lower-level outcomes and metrics, which will then be approved by the Result Team.

4. Analysis: Staff, stakeholders, Park Board, Park District Oversight Committee, and/or the public react to and provide input to the Results Team regarding outcomes, metrics, and performance targets. This phase also includes aligning actions with outcomes.[3]

When analysis is complete, the information will be used to guide decisions and adjust management strategies. Results from these measures should be used by staff members that work at the same level the metrics were developed at—helping staff to quantify and measure the outcomes they themselves seek. Then, the process cycles again. Based on the analysis, staff will review and update outcomes (definition phase), adjust measures based off the updated outcomes or develop new measures that are more closely related to the outcomes (development phase), and collect data.

5. Logic Model: While the department-wide performance management system cascades from department to division to work unit in a top to bottom cascade, each measurement fits into a horizontal logic model. A logic model describes a sequence of events designed to bring about benefits or change over time. The following is a simple logic model:

Inputs ⟶ **Activities** ⟶ **Outputs** ⟶ **Outcomes**

Where:

Inputs = what resources go into a program – money, staff equipment

Activities = what activities the program undertakes – programs, work tasks

Outputs = what is produced through those activities

Outcomes = the changes or benefits that result from the program – Parks ultimate outcomes of healthy people, healthy environment, financial sustainability, strong communities

Logic models can be used for program design and management, as well as for evaluation.

The Results Team

The Results Team will work under the direction of the Superintendent to implement the performance management system and to create the public report. As the performance management process grows throughout the department, the Results Team will need to delegate responsibility to employees who can help others to develop specific outcomes to their work and metrics. At levels closer to the public, the Results Team will select staff to work with others to develop and measure outcomes.

The Results Team will strongly emphasize race and social justice issues, and will ensure the City's Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) is fully integrated into the performance management process.[4]

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[3] Data should be analyzed to determine the strength of the link between the action taken/output produced and the desired outcome (ultimate, intermediate, or short term outcomes).

[4] The Results Team will incorporate Parks' RSJI Change Team into the performance management process through one or more of the following methods: (1) including an RSJI representative on the Results Team itself, (2) include

Standards and guidelines

The Results Team and participating staff will follow the Washington Office of Financial Management's "Performance Measure Guide" as a guide to performance measure development. As a general rule, outcomes will preferably be assessed through a small number of metrics. Measurements seek to answer questions such as (as written in WAOFM's "Performance Measure Guide"):

- Are we accomplishing our mission?
- Are we achieving our strategic goals and objectives?
- Are our customers satisfied?
- Are our main production processes working properly?
- Are we managing our projects and finances?
- Are we as cost-efficient as the national leader in our line of business?

Additionally, performance measures should meet the following criteria:

- Relevant: Direct feedback on the objectives
- Feasible: Credible, commonly collected data for cost effective reporting
- Timely: Relevant actions and outcomes, with an eye to the future
- Useful: Supports decision-making and addresses local priorities
- Systemic: Measures progress toward multiple goals where possible
- Reliable: Consistent measurement of performance within and across communities
- Valid: Represents underlying phenomena of the Objective accurately

Different outcomes, measurements, and timelines for each level

At each level of the organization, the Results Team will play a different role. This section of the work plan details those roles at each level.

The Results Team's first step will be to develop an indicator[5] for each of Parks' four ultimate outcomes. Indicators of these outcomes should be broad and community-wide in scope:

Healthy people. Parks and recreation activities are essential to most healthy lifestyles. A good indicator of healthy people would seek to determine if the people of Seattle are healthy relative to past health or to the health of others.

Healthy environment. A functioning, healthy environment is crucial for Seattle to be a livable, sustainable city. A good indicator should answer the following questions: Is Seattle's environment healthy? Is it becoming more or less sustainable? This indicator could incorporate data showing Parks'

RSJI Change Team input on outcomes and metrics as they are developed, or (3) creating a dedicated outcome and measure(s) for race and social justice issues within the department.

[5] If multiple data sources are necessary for an indicator, the Results Team will weigh each component appropriately, and combine them into a single indicator.

performance across various environmental fronts: stormwater reduction, urban forest health, wildlife health and diversity, and energy sustainability.

Financial sustainability. Taxpayers deserve government agencies that spend public funds prudently, efficiently, and sustainably. A good indicator should answer the following questions: Was funding allocated correctly?[6] Was funding spent efficiently?

Strong communities. Parks, open spaces, facilities, and recreation activities promote community growth by bringing people together and building identity around shared spaces. A good indicator should assess the degree to which the Department contributes to people's sense of community through programs and places.

The first year of indicator data collection will form the baseline. Before second-year data collection begins, the Results Team will set performance targets for each indicator.

Because Parks' ultimate outcomes are largely impacted by variables outside of Parks' control, any timeframes or performance targets should be conservatively estimated. Parks' lack of control over ultimate outcomes also necessitates a longer evaluation period—indicators should be reassessed and updated every six years, so they align with the Department's six-year planning cycle.

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1. **Department level**: Create indicators of the Department's ultimate outcomes: Healthy People, Healthy Environment, Financial Sustainability, and Strong Communities.
   a. Timeline
      i. Definition: Completed
      ii. Development: Early 2015
      iii. Data Collection: Mid 2015—data collected yearly
      iv. Analysis: Every six years, synchronized with the department's six-year planning cycle
   b. Actions
      i. Results Team works with division directors and Superintendent to develop indicators of ultimate outcomes. Measurements should be taken every year, and the Results Team will review, revise, and update the indicators as part of the department six-year planning cycle.

At each level described next, the Results Team will work with staff to develop anticipated outcomes that are aligned under Parks' ultimate outcomes. Then, the Results Team will work with staff to develop measures of those outcomes.

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[6] An indicator of financial sustainability could measure the alignment (or lack thereof) of basic services to budgeted priorities/cost recovery ratio/fee structure.

2. **Division level**: Create metrics for *intermediate outcomes*—division-level outcomes highly correlated with ultimate outcomes. Some divisions have overlapping goals, so an important step in developing outcomes and measures at the division level is to combine similar and overlapping goals.[7]

    a. Timeline
        i. Definition: Mid 2015
        ii. Development: Mid-late 2015
        iii. Data Collection: Some pilots in 2015, data collection begins as metrics are developed.
        iv. Analysis: Every two years
    b. Actions
        i. Results Team works with division directors and division staff to define intermediate outcomes. Duplicate or similar intermediate outcomes are combined, and the Results Team works with all involved divisions to develop measures of intermediate outcomes.
        ii. Staff members are identified to assist staff developing program, unit, and section-level outcomes and metrics.

3. **Programs, unit, and section level**: Create metrics of "short-term outcomes"—outcomes that significantly impact the intermediate outcomes. These measures do not need to use the same data as division level measures (but could), and do not need to correspond horizontally across different units within a program (but could). The Results Team's most important role in this process is to engage staff in developing measures that are *truly useful to staff,* and correlate with the Department's outcomes*.*

    c. Timeline
        i. Definition: Mid 2015
        ii. Development: Mid-late 2015
        iii. Data Collection: Rolling start—begins as metrics are developed over time
        iv. Analysis: Every year
    d. Actions
        i. Results Team works with Parks staff to define short-term outcomes. Each short-term outcome rolls up to a division-level outcome. Results Team works with Parks staff to develop measures of the short term outcomes.

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[7] For example, both the Parks Division and the Regional Parks and Strategic Outreach Division perform park maintenance, but there should only be one division-level outcome related to park maintenance. Each division would set its own targets to achieve its portion of the outcome, and data from both divisions would be combined in measuring the outcome.

> Measurements should be taken every year.
> ii. Staff members are identified to assist with outcome, output, and metric development at the employee/work unit level.

> 4. **Employee/work unit level**: Create metrics for individual employee/work group contributions tohigher-level goals.[8]
>   e. Timeline:
>   i. This timeline to be developed in future, based on progress made at the program, unit, and section level.[9]
>   f. Actions
>   i. Staff from program, unit, and section level have been previously identified to assist employees/work units in developing outcomes and measures. These staff work with employees and work units to define specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound outputs, and develop measures of those outputs.

Oversight and Public Engagement

During the initial outcome and metric development process, the Results Team will submit a report for each level (department, division, etc.) to the Board of Park Commissioners for input. Each report will overview the process used for development and include the outcomes, measures, and goals chosen.

Each year, the Results Team will compile an annual report that includes measures of progress toward Parks' high-level outcomes. The annual report will include indicators of ultimate outcomes, measures of division-level outcomes, and measures of important program, unit, and section-level outcomes if necessary. The annual report, designed to be reader-friendly, will be widely distributed and posted on Parks' web site.

Throughout the process to develop performance management measures and on-going through the data collection and assessment phases, Parks will involve the public in the conversation. Recognizing the inter-local agreement with the newly formed Seattle Park District calls for the establishment of an oversight committee that has responsibility to review an annual report that includes the assessment of performance measures and expenditure of District funds, they will be included as active participants in the review process. Public engagement will occur in the general sphere with the goal of gaining a better understanding of what the public wants, and through the engagement of "friends of" groups, advisory councils and subject area experts who can advise on specific lines of Parks' business. The Park Board's Accountability and Performance Management Committee will be a continuous contact point, with the

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[8] Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound outputs.
[9] Integrating existing performance management systems at the employee/work unit level with the department-wide system, and creating new performance management practices where they did not exist before will be a lengthy ongoing process. In the interim, employees should be encouraged to align the outcomes they seek and the data they track to ultimate, intermediate, and short-term outcomes.

full Board engaged at significant points in the development of the performance management system, its continuous operation and on-going communication with City officials and the public.