

# Capitol Hill Special Events Survey & Assessment Report

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction of Project

This project is an effort by the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods to better understand the impacts of special events in the public realm within the Capitol Hill neighborhood. With input from a community advisory taskforce, feedback was gathered from local businesses and residents through surveys, interviews and focus groups.

This effort engaged over forty stakeholders directly in focus groups and interviews, and solicited survey responses from over 1470 individuals and business participants. The goal is to use data gathered through this process to provide recommendations to the Special Events Committee, the body responsible for permitting special events throughout the City.

## Key Findings

- **Culture & Identity:** Special Events are vital to community identity, cultural vibrancy and economic vitality in Capitol Hill. The History of Capitol Hill as a home to artists and LGBTQ community is reinforced through special events
- **Safety, security, health and cleanliness** are top of mind in regards to the effects of special events in the neighborhood. And more police doesn't always equate to an increased sense of safety.
- **Transit, traffic and parking** effects of events are substantial and of concern to local residents.
- Special events offer **increased business** and visibility for local businesses and artists, but especially nightlife businesses and musicians.
- Special events **adversely effect local businesses** with closure, blockage and decreased revenues, especially for daytime retail and service-based businesses.
- **Intermediaries are needed** to help facilitate and mitigate negative impacts from events, and the neighborhood associations have been inadequate lately.
- There is a persistent **issue with poor communication** regarding events, with a feeling that notification is inadequate, that events are under-promoted, and that community feedback does not affect substantially change future outcomes.
- Participants feel that the **City should take more responsibility** for the negative impacts of events permitted for the public right-of-way, and that events should not have high admission prices without clear and transparent public benefit.
- The neighborhood wants to **grow and add events**, but want them to be aligned to neighborhood values and priorities, such as prioritizing POC and LGBTQ audiences and programming.

## Individual Event Findings

- **Pride** is a key cultural experience in the neighborhood and although it has some negative impacts on revenues and traffic for Broadway businesses, as well as some cleanliness and safety challenges, the overwhelming sentiment is that it is vitally important to the identity of the neighborhood and to the LGBTQ community of the region.
- **Capitol Hill Block Party** has a historical cloud of conflict and community anxiety surrounding it, with both strong detractors and advocates from the neighborhood. Supporters name its importance to local music as an independent music festival in a historically artistic neighborhood. Critics note the persistent and growing challenge of mismatch between the event and the location, leading to continuing setbacks to local businesses and residents as well as concerns about accessibility and mobility.
- **Free speech events** are supported overall, with a desire for de-escalation of law enforcement crowd control and suppression techniques.

- **Cal Anderson and Volunteer Parks** are seen as growing cultural venues, with a desire for more events in the parks.
- **Other temporary street closures** have been met with enthusiasm, with some encouragement of stronger safety, security and programming.

## Recommendations

The following are brief summaries of the recommendations based on the feedback collected. The full report that follows goes into more depth on each of these concepts.

- **Safety, Security and Cleanliness:** Explore tactics such as increased police presence, community-based security patrols and recalibrated event structures to increase safety, security and cleanliness.
- **Community Outreach and Engagement:** Improve event outreach by providing event organizers with stronger contact data and more guidance and support on outreach plans.
- **Intermediary Community Organizations:** Establish one or more community associations as event intermediary in the neighborhood.
- **Right-of-way Permitting:** Consider recalibration of permitting policies and practices for the public right-of-way.
- **Cal Anderson Park:** Invest in Cal Anderson Park as a venue for special events and other programming.

## INTRODUCTION

This project is an effort by the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods to better understand the impacts of special events in the public realm within the Capitol Hill neighborhood. Feedback was gathered from local businesses and residents through surveys, interviews and focus groups. The goal is to use data gathered through this process to provide recommendations to the Special Events Committee, the body responsible for permitting special events throughout the City.

The project is managed and facilitated by consultant Andy Fife of Fife Consulting. An advisory task force of six representatives of community organizations met twice to provide input into the outreach plan and scope of inquiry for survey, interviews and focus groups. Task force members also helped reach out to key contacts and promote the survey through digital channels and door-to-door outreach.

The interview and focus group elements included additional community members and representatives. All told, over 1500 stakeholders were engaged, including 1397 in the community survey, 73 in the business survey and 42 directly between interviews and focus groups.

### Community Survey

The community survey was a shorter survey with 11 questions regarding events on Capitol Hill generally, focused on individual residents, employees, visitors and guests. 1397 individuals responded to the survey. Of them, 30% identify as a member of the LGBTQ community.

Type of community member:

- 55% were residents of Capitol Hill,
- 25% work on Capitol Hill,
- 84% enjoy the neighborhood as a customer or otherwise,
- 35% receive services in the neighborhood, and
- 77% attend events.

Of the 1111 that live and work on the hill, here is where they are located:

- 42% are in the direct footprint of events,
- 25% are in the adjacent areas within 2 blocks of the event footprint, and
- 33% were in the neighborhood beyond the event footprint.

Participants demographics, racially and ethnically:

- White/Caucasian at 1122 (81%),
- 117 (8%) Asian,
- 60 (4%) African American/Black,
- 20 (1%) Middle Easterner/North African,
- 18 (1%) American Indian/Alaska Native, and
- 18 (1%) Hawaiian Native/Pacific Islander.

Gender-wise, participants identify as the following:

- 48% identify as female,
- 47% identify as male,
- 4% identify gender non-conforming, and
- 2% identify transgender.

## Business Survey

The business survey was longer, with 61 questions, inviting representatives of neighborhood businesses and organizations a chance to provide deeper examination of each of several events, including Pride, Capitol Hill Block Party, Foot and Cycle Races, Free Speech Events and other events in parks and on the streets. There were 73 respondents to the business survey, of which 26% are considered WMBE (women- and minority-owned business), and 23% identify as members of the LGBTQ community.

Role of respondents within their organization:

- 33% were owners or board members,
- 30% were management staff,
- 23% were other staff, and
- 21% were staff leadership (such as CEO, ED or GM).

Regarding business types, respondents noted the following:

- 20% were daytime businesses,
- 17% were evening businesses, and
- 57% were both daytime and evening.

Participating organizations self-identified their business-type:

- 41% are restaurant/bars,
- 29% are arts/culture organizations or spaces,
- 17% are retail with a storefront, and
- the remainder a collection of offices, community, education and nonprofit organizations.

Location of business respondents:

- 73% of respondents are in the direct footprint of the events, while
- 10% are in the adjacent 2 blocks,
- 9% are in the broader neighborhood, and another
- 9% are from elsewhere in the city.

## Taskforce

The community taskforce helped to advise and guide the work of the project. Taskforce members reviewed the surveys, interviews, focus groups and draft recommendations. The group came together in person twice and provided guidance via email and phone otherwise. Taskforce members also assisted in boosting outreach efforts, through both digital and door-to-door outreach in the neighborhood.

Taskforce membership included the following:

- Samantha Stork, Seattle Department of Neighborhoods
- Brace Evans, Capitol Hill Arts District
- Rachael Brister, Cal Anderson Park Alliance (former)
- Phillip Sit, Seattle Office of Economic Development
- Tamara Asakawa, Lifelong Aids Alliance Stores, Broadway BIA
- Christina Arrington, Capitol Hill Business Alliance (GSBA)

## Focus Groups & Interviews

Interviews and focus groups offered opportunity for businesses, residents and other community members to provide a deeper set of reflections and feedback on the impacts and benefits of events on Capitol Hill. Two focus groups of approximately 90 minutes each were held, as well as a series of 60-minute interviews. Participants included the following:

- Kate Becker, Seattle Office of Film & Music (former)
- Rachel Ravitch, Community Organizer
- Jason LaJeunesse, Capitol Hill Block Party, Guild Seattle
- Kate Harris, Capitol Hill Block Party
- Michael Wells, Seattle Office of Economic Development
- Chris Swenson, Seattle Office of Special Events
- Brace Evans, Capitol Hill Arts District
- Rachael Brister, Cal Anderson Park Alliance (former)
- Phillip Sit, Seattle Office of Economic Development
- Tamara Asakawa, Lifelong Aids Alliance Stores, Broadway BIA
- Christina Arrington, Capitol Hill Business Alliance (GSBA)
- Lindsey Bryden, Elysian Brewing Company
- Vivian Hua, Northwest Film Forum
- Jerry Everard, Seattle Music Commission
- Lt Paul Leung, Seattle Police Department East Precinct
- Jon Milazzo, Retrofit Home
- Lori Pomeranz, Retrofit Home
- Matt Pritchett, Retrofit Home
- Joey Burgess, Queer/Bar and Grims
- Tracy Taylor, Elliot Bay Book Company
- Victoria Schoenburg, Seattle Parks & Recreation
- Randy Wiger, Seattle Parks & Recreation
- Carl Berquist, Seattle Parks & Recreation
- Sheila Edwards Lange, Seattle Central College, Cal Anderson Park Alliance
- Jack Keever, Seattle Central College, Broadway Business Improvement Association
- Elayne Wylie, Gender Justice League
- Hannah Ferguson, Annex Theatre
- Jade Jones, Annex Theatre
- Gedney Barclay, Velocity Dance Center
- Anne McCullough, First Hill Improvement Association
- Julio LeFleur, Hothouse Spa & Sauna
- Matria O'Hora, Hothouse Spa & Sauna
- Gregg Holcomb, Witness, Broadway Business Improvement Area
- Diana Adams, Vermillion
- Jill Cronauer, Hunters Capital
- Liz Elkins, Poquitos

## KEY FINDINGS

Special events are important to the neighborhood of Capitol Hill, and highly valued by its residents and businesses as a critical thread within the fabric of community. Respondents across the board recounted important memories, experiences and benefits of special events from the neighborhood over the years, and expressed their desire for sustaining and further advancing new and existing events in the future.

*“Special events tie us together as a community.”*

With high response rates on the surveys, and strong language in all of the engagements, it is clear that the community is highly aware and passionate about a number of critical negative impacts and positive benefits, as well as the systems and services by the city and other local intermediaries for addressing them.

Responses had particularly strong themes throughout the surveys, focus groups and interviews in the following areas, with impacts and benefits noted in each: neighborhood culture and identity; safety, security and cleanliness; traffic and parking; and business foot traffic and sales. Perception of these themes varied greatly within discussion of specific events, with very strong perspectives expressed around Pride and Capitol Hill Block Party, and a number of key reflections also on other street closure, free speech and parks event activities.

In addition, there were some clear themes that emerged reflecting on City services, policies, permitting and capacity. Participants shared similar concerns about the lack of a neighborhood intermediary between community business, residents and the event organizers. Several themes emerged regarding the need for stronger mediation and communication by the City and/or other community organizations.

*“Capitol Hill has been a queer neighborhood for many years. Events are important for our visibility, our humanity, equal rights and activism. They are essential to marking this neighborhood as the place for representation. It may be shifting, but the history of the neighborhood is queer and it deserves historical markers.”*

Finally, respondents made clear that not only are the historic and current events important, but that they want to see more events. Participants outlined some primary priorities for additional events in the future.

Below are further notes on key themes from the findings.

### Culture and Identity

- Events are important to the cultural life and identity of the community.
  - Having the LGBTQ community in the streets as a recognizable and visible constituency is deemed vital for culture, safety, security, sense of belonging, history and social equity.
  - Community pride in showcasing local artists, musicians, writers and performers, especially from POC and LGBTQ communities.
  - Demonstrations, marches and rallies are key elements of community’s progressivism, activism, civic engagement and commitment to free speech.
- Events are a way to combat negative cultural effects of gentrification and displacement.

- Some events perceived as further threatening the cultural identity of the neighborhood by attracting too many outsiders with values that run counter to the history of the community and threaten the safety and visibility of Queer and Trans folks in particular.

### Safety, Security, Health and Cleanliness

- Strong theme among individual respondents around sense of safety and security in the neighborhood, especially at night.
- Reported increase in visible homelessness and open drug use as contributing to unsafe feelings.
- Common mention of increased alcohol-related behavior, sexual violence, hate crime and property crime.
- Business owner concerns regarding cleanliness and security of buildings and public way.
- Ongoing persistent concern by daytime retail and service organizations about the effects of nightlife-oriented events.
- Broad geography for impacts noted beyond the immediate event footprint, along with a lack or a delay in adequate cleanup efforts.
- Desire for stronger event security practices.
- Desire for increased police presence (although others specifically pointed out that police involvement did not increase feelings of safety for those who have historically suffered from police abuse and bias.)
- Concerns regarding aggression and conflict within the police response to local civic action.
- Some events and active programming perceived as improving safety and security outcomes, especially in parks.
- Multiple observations that there is correlation between the degree of community involvement in events and the level of perceived safety, security and cleanliness.

*“Police do not necessarily always make all people feel safer, especially [queer and trans people of color], the most vulnerable among us. But something must be done to keep [Capitol Hill] a safe place for the Queer community. It is changing, and not for the better.”*

### Transit, Traffic & Parking

- Concern about the effects of events on parking and traffic in the neighborhood, especially among local residents.
- Challenges with alternatives as well, such as rideshare (Lyft and Uber) clogging up the streets and bikeshare programs cluttering sidewalks.
- Noted that public transportation investments may continue to provide better non-driving alternatives for visitors, but that a full regional rail system is still a long way off.
- As far as the existing transit system, participants mentioned frustration at navigating connecting buses, especially remarking on unreliability of connections late at night.
- Positive comments regarding parking and street use during events, clearing out cars temporarily and providing new experience of the streetscape, reclaiming it for pedestrian use.

### Business and property foot traffic, visibility and accessibility

- Events bring a mixture of positive and negative outcomes for local businesses and organizations.
- Concern over blocked visibility and access to storefronts or other building entrances.
- Positive effects on foot traffic, visibility and revenue for some businesses while creating negative effects for others.
- Nightlife-oriented, alcohol-serving businesses are more likely to report a benefit from the major events than other types of organizations.
- Daytime retail businesses are more likely to report a negative impact from major events.

- Businesses understand that there is an acceptable level of negative impacts from events, which may be experienced individually in order to support a greater community good. Not all businesses feel that all of the neighborhood events are currently or historically in balance.

### Imbalanced negative impacts vs. positive benefits

- Park spaces and the public right of way are recognized as places for all kinds of activities and some lead to negative outcomes for individual nearby businesses and residents.
- Rights of free expression and free assembly balance against the rights of residents and businesses. Some amount of setback to businesses residents and community is expected and understood.
- The same goes for arts, culture and music activities. Understood margin of acceptable individual loss in order to hold space for the more considerable general good.
- Shared feeling among community responses that there has not been a consistent balance between community benefits and individual negative impacts.
- Many participants felt that the city should take more responsibility for ensuring the mitigation of negative impacts for events permitted for the public right-of-way.

### Missing Intermediaries

- Closure of Capitol Hill Chamber left a vacuum for community organizing and leadership for neighborhood.
- Businesses report confusion and conflict due to a lack of community association or agency to provide leadership, representation and/or facilitation of community process.
- Many fledgling or historically smaller entities exist and have the opportunity to step into a leadership role surrounding events, including GSBA's new Capitol Hill Business Alliance, the Broadway BIA, the Cal Anderson Park Alliance and the Capitol Hill Eco-district, among others.
- Several related events and programs adjacent to special events, such as Art Walk, Lit Crawl, and Film Screenings in the park would benefit from more centralized communication and coordination.
- Businesses, residents and event producers share frustration at lack of intermediary help with negotiation, coordination, communication and regulation.

### Communication and engagement

- Community members report a lot of excitement and enthusiasm for events, but often find out about them afterwards or stumble upon them unexpectedly. Stronger promotions are desired.
- Many community members feel that their voices have no meaningful outlet to express concern, participate in planning or provide feedback for evaluation of events.
- Respondents do not feel like their input has led to swift and meaningful change historically, and they do not trust or expect that this input will either.
- Notification process, as required currently by city permitting is inadequate and ineffective. In some cases, it does not reach the right leadership or position within a company or organization. In others, it comes at the wrong time and/or includes limited information. And across the board, it does not provide adequate opportunity for input and partnership with community. (An example was reported by Seattle Central College, whose Director of Auxiliary Services would be the main liaison to community events and partnerships but does not regularly receive notifications of events. He pointed out that a hand-delivered flier probably gets lost at the reception desk, long before reaching him or other key decision makers. And/or an email still being sent to an old contact from years ago.)

- The city lacks any meaningful database of contacts that can be utilized to facilitate communication, as is evident by the challenging process of even communicating this assessment. Many respondents were surprised and frustrated that they heard about this survey late or from indirect sources.

*“Restaurant managers don’t really use email as much to do their work, so really it may not be the best way to notify them about events or other community priorities.”*

### City Permitting

- There is frustration that city permitting process is opaque, inaccessible, unwieldy and slow, and that it doesn’t include a meaningful element of community engagement.
- Many respondents expressed a persistent feeling of injustice that private ticketed events could take place in the right-of-way with such a high price for admission and low accessibility for local residents. The perception is that CHBP and certain Pride events substantially benefit only the private for-profit businesses that produce them.

### New Events

Respondents generally see that successful events build on the historical culture of the neighborhood. They enjoy the street closures and want to see more events that celebrate and advance Capitol Hill as a unique neighborhood, special for its particularly rich arts, cultural and business communities. They want events that reflect the local values and priorities of the neighborhood, and want to see events that are inclusive for POC and LGBTQ people.

The neighborhood has an appetite for more events activities of all types and a more dynamic use of streets, sidewalks, parks and plazas. But any additional new activity needs to be done with proper planning for safety, security, cleaning and maintenance, and neighborhood communications.

Also any new or changed events should work actively towards accessibility for all participants. Artists, musicians and other programming should prioritize POC and LGBTQ, especially in providing paid opportunities. Accommodations should be made for attendees with disabilities and for low-income residents, while any proceeds should be directed back towards the neighborhood in the form of community-governed programming and services.

## INDIVIDUAL EVENT FINDINGS

### PRIDE EVENTS

- On the business survey, of those that responded:
  - o 65% said Pride events increase business, while 32% says they decrease it.
  - o 53% mentioned a positive benefit in terms of culture and community
  - o 21% mentioned negative parking and traffic impacts
  - o 71% found the effects for their business were positive overall while 15% found them negative overall
- Most respondents positive overall about the current constellation of neighborhood events.
- Concern about commercialization and corporatization of Pride, moving farther away from the values and community roots at its core.
- Perception that Pride events get the benefit of both the city service discounts afforded to Free Speech Events while also benefitting from commercial sponsorship.
- Trans Pride event came up often as a huge success and a key experience. Especially Gender Justice League-led safety and security patrol as a successful model for non-police event security.
- Some concern among Broadway businesses about a loss of access and visibility due to booth placement during Pride events.
- Common theme about perceived persistent safety and clean-up issues surrounding the events, with impacts such as litter, vandalism, vomit and public urination in a large area around the event footprint.
- Some concern among neighborhood businesses and organizations about inconsistent communications and partnership between and across Pride events. Opportunity for better collaboration
- Persistent theme that safety, security and cleanliness within the neighborhood are adversely affected during Pride events.
- Common concerns that increased police presence at Pride events doesn't necessarily contribute to a feeling of safety and security and that efforts to improve safety, security and emergency services should consider community-based models such as those used at Trans Pride.
- Reports of success with joint Pride event discussions (SEC Subcommittee), as well as opportunities for more coordination and partnership across separate Pride events.

*“[Pride] boosts the circulation of people past our doors, and reinforces our place as a queer-friendly/led space in a queer-friendly/centered neighborhood. The only thing I would change is opt out of corporate sponsorship and focus on organizers and coalitions that are building up community. They need the representation and PR, and corporations don't. It feels like they're using Pride for their own profit margin.”*

### CAPITOL HILL BLOCK PARTY

- On the business survey, of those that responded:
  - o 52% said CHBP events increase business, while 39% says they decrease it.

- 24% mentioned a positive benefit in terms of culture and community, but another 21% pointed to negative cultural impacts
- 24% mentioned negative parking, traffic and other negative impacts of the crowd
- 39% found the effects for their business were positive overall while 31% found them negative overall
- Notable passion and friction within the community regarding this event, including strong feelings of anger, defensiveness, frustration, advocacy, fear and injustice. Many comments and discussion focused on it, especially among business representatives but also among individual residents and guests as well.
- Attendees, music industry, community and nightlife businesses within the neighborhood are mostly positive about CHBP while other local businesses, organizations and residents are mostly negative or mixed.
- Commonly expressed concern that CHBP programming, audience and event culture does not match well with current or historical neighborhood values, culture and community.
- A large number of both individual and business respondents reporting event has outgrown the location in terms of crowd size, programming level, cost and negative impacts.
- Common concern about ticket cost and accessibility.
- Common theme of celebration for CHBP for its importance as a showcase of local music and one of the only remaining independent summer music festivals of its size and type in the country.
- Physical accessibility, crowd size and crowd control safety concerns. Reports of feeling “penned-in” with bottlenecks and mobility issues in layout and fencing.
- Fences are a long-standing and well-documented problem for local businesses within the footprint, blocking entrances, reducing visibility and/or removing access to a number of retail storefronts and other building access points.
- Negative business impacts are numerous. Some businesses close entirely. Others suffer slow business and a need to constantly police their doors and windows for safety from the less savory behavior of event-goers.

*Not only does [CHBP] benefit [local businesses] financially in a very difficult time of the year but it also gives a platform to showcase incredible arts in our neighborhood. From amazing superstar talent like Lizzo to the emerging local artist who is looking to gain exposure on a larger platform, CHBP truly brings a priceless value to the Capitol Hill community.*

- Strong theme about perceived persistent safety and clean-up issues surrounding the event, with impacts such as litter, vandalism, vomit and public urination in a large area around the event footprint.

*“I have, alongside many other business owners, tried for years to advocate for limits on this festival. We eventually gave up due to the sense that y'all do not care. The organizers intimidated and outright bullied many of us. I have gone out of my way to forge a decent relationship with the remaining leadership, but that doesn't change my feelings about the festival itself. It literally takes me the rest of the summer to catch up, if I even can, from the annual loss of business due to this event. It's a disaster.”*

- It was recognized that negative impacts have improved over time and that event producers have taken substantial steps to reduce and mitigate negative impacts with outreach, partnership and adjustments to event design.

- A number of businesses note the importance of the event economically for specific music and nightlife venues in the neighborhood. At least two businesses questioned whether their business model would survive without the event.

- Persistently reported negative feelings and suspicion towards the event, with recognition of potential roots in past leadership. Reported historical silencing by organizers of women- and queer-owned businesses. Multiple reported lingering feelings of danger commenting publicly for fear of retribution. Also notable were comments that these concerns may be based on historical conditions and not reflective of current personnel and practices.

#### **FREE SPEECH EVENTS (Womxn's March, Black Lives Matter, May Day)**

- Comments were limited, but positive overall.

- Respondents almost universally highlighted positive outcomes, including many reports of increased business foot traffic and sales.

- Main negative replies were from businesses on the main route to downtown as May

Day, Womxn's March and others can lead to long closure/blockage without adequate communication or support.

- Multiple comments regarding trash and litter in parks and along streets after free speech events.
- Concern about May Day, which has historically involved riots and street actions that feel dangerous to employees and businesses.
- Many comments about de-militarizing and/or decreasing and de-escalating police presence, and concern that SPD spends more energy protecting conservative reactionary counter-protestors (ie. Proud Boys, etc.) than the more abundant local progressive activists.

#### **EVENTS IN PARKS**

- Events in Cal Anderson and Volunteer Parks are well-liked.
- Residents and businesses see park events as a strategy for improving safety and stimulating economic activity.
- Interest in more small and mid-sized regular weekly and daily event activity in the parks to increase regular programmed traffic and participation.
- Many questions and comments about expanding and/or moving more Pride and CHBP event activity out of the streets and into the parks.
- Several comments about preserving some amount of open space during events.

#### **OTHER STREET CLOSURES**

- Many reflections on the 'People Streets' pedestrian corridor street closures from last year.

- Businesses and individuals enthusiastic for the effort, and would like to see more attempts at closing Pike to traffic on weekend nights during the summer.
- Priority to better program with activity, and better partner with community on programming. Interest in more neighborhood artists and cultural organizations, especially LGBTQ.
- Another priority is safety and cleaning. Nightlife-oriented event activity is perceived to draw an outside crowd with more disruption, more mess and more safety issues. Particularly concerning for daytime retail businesses and organizations with a focus on health, wellness or community services.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations address the key issues listed above. They are listed in prioritized order, and include potential immediate objectives for consideration in 2020. Each of these recommendations are built from direct suggestions and requests outlined by community members in project conversations and survey data.

### Explore tactics to improve safety, security and cleanliness of events.

Given the number and force of expressed concerns regarding safety, security and cleanliness within the direct footprint and throughout the neighborhood, the City should both prioritize some immediate steps to decrease negative impacts in this area while developing long-term strategies for improvement.

Firstly, the capacity of existing police and emergency services should be reviewed and expansion, either/both through the expansion of the force, or through revised tactics and policy that lead to more strategic and effective deployment of police personnel.

Secondly, the City, along with community partners should explore options for a community-based safety / security patrol model such as the successful efforts of Gender Justice League at this year's Trans Pride event. Several participants mentioned the success of the model and possible replication for other events, for efforts outside of the direct event footprint and in future years.

Next, it should be noted the importance of strong neighborhood partnership, alliance and alignment across all aspects of events. Businesses especially noted that negative impacts were lessened whenever events were more actively designed, planned, implemented, supported and programmed in heavy partnership with the neighborhood. The City should take steps to incentivize community partnership in all stages and aspects of event planning, regulation, production and promotion.

In addition, the common concerns about event layout and crowd engineering deserve consideration where safety is concerned. Worry about event crowd size and safety dangers from panic are considerable, and the City should take steps to ensure that events are planned for an appropriate size, they are not oversold, and event infrastructure is set with safety as a priority.

Ultimately, over time, policy, funding and support should be provided to work towards solutions that eliminate fencing. In the meantime, measures should be required and/or directly pursued by the City to ensure better safety, security and cleaning for the direct footprint of events in 2020, as well as throughout a larger area throughout the neighborhood.

#### **2020 safety, security and cleanliness objective**

*Require a larger footprint of cleaning and security investments by events in the neighborhood. This could be best accomplished through a neighborhood partnership with a local business alliance or other to hire or assemble a neighborhood security and cleaning team not unlike the crew of downtown stewards managed by the Downtown Seattle Association or other Business Improvement Districts throughout the city.*

### Improve event outreach by supporting event organizers with stronger data and more guidance on outreach plans.

In order to overcome frustrations with lack of permitted event communication and awareness, the City can better support event organizers in outreach, notification and promotion of special events. Towards this end, the City could develop a stronger database(s) of key contacts.

Ideally event organizers would be able to access a comprehensive list of key contacts specific to an affected area. The list would include retail businesses, service organizations, residents, property managers, faith organizations, community partners, and any other stakeholder in the direct footprint of the event.

Furthermore, the event information would be communicated broadly to stakeholders in adjacent areas within the neighborhood. Communication plans could be required of events and reviewed for approval as a part of the permitting process. Those plans should include multiple diverse channels, and the City may

build data resources, communications tools and outreach plan templates in order to support event producers in their outreach.

Finally, the data on local stakeholders and especially the key contacts at businesses and institutions need to be maintained with regular updates to ensure communications are reaching the person or persons that need the information.

**2020 outreach objective**

*Though this is an ongoing concern, the immediate short-term opportunity is for the City to work together on developing a shared list of stakeholders by exploring existing datasets, such as the databases of community partners, event producers, the city business license database and/or county and state databases. In addition, efforts to template stronger outreach plans that encourage multi-channel communications and neighborhood engagement should be possible within existing City capacity.*

## **Establish one or more lead community association(s) as event intermediary in the neighborhood.**

With a consistent concern among neighborhood businesses about lack of representation and voice regarding special events, and a reported confusion among residents as to the proper channels for feedback and participation regarding events, the need for an intermediary community voice is clear. Businesses especially feel the loss of the Capitol Hill Chamber of Commerce in discussions of special events and otherwise. The City should proactively help develop a strong partner for event organizing and community engagement.

The City should continue and/or expand any investment in one or more Capitol Hill community/business associations, and should explicitly direct the institution(s) to participate as a facilitator in discussions of regulating, developing, promoting and improving events and especially in mediating the negative safety, security, cleanliness and business revenue impacts.

**2020 intermediary organization objective**

*The City should choose one or two Capitol Hill community organizations to lead on event conversations, consider funding and other support to help their capacity and invite them to participate in special event permitting process and hopefully partnership for 2020 events in the neighborhood.*

## **Consider recalibrating permitting policies and practices for the public right-of-way.**

Many participants, especially among neighborhood businesses, expressed concern about closing the public right-of-way for low-access, private events with high admissions costs, especially when proceeds benefit private, for-profit business. The strength and frequency of concern suggests consideration for a change in City policy, practice or both.

Community stakeholders are interested in seeing the city consider policies that reduce or fully eliminate closed ticketed events in the public right-of-way. Short of elimination, they expressed a desire for limits on expensive admissions fees. And they hoped to see a more formal requirement for event proceeds to benefit neighborhood-based community non-profit organizations. They were especially interested in seeing a stronger, more formal direction of any event proceeds towards community-reinvestment around mitigation of negative impacts.

As emphasized many times, most community voices do not intend for these changes to endanger the continuing existence of any events. If any of the above policies are to be pursued, there will be negative implications and possibly existential threat for events such as Capitol Hill Block Party and the city should consider subsidizing loss in order to sustain the event through any transitions into new financial models, fee structures or formats.

Also, as change is considered for events in the public right-of-way, the parks should be considered for improvements to services, infrastructure and policy to better equip them as venues for event activities, especially in Capitol Hill's Cal Anderson and Volunteer Parks. This is explored further below.

**2020 public right-of-way permitting objective**

*While broader adjustment to policies and practices for permitting are reviewed, the City should consider a requirement that a portion of net proceeds above costs for 2020 Capitol Hill events go into community-reinvestment and impact mitigation efforts. It would be best if these efforts were managed by or in partnership with a community-based nonprofit with a neighborhood mission and community-based governance so that stakeholders can access and observe a transparent and formal process.*

**Invest in Cal Anderson Park as a venue for special events and other programming.**

Participants in all surveys and engagements regularly brought up interest and enthusiasm for the parks, especially Cal Anderson Park, as venue both for relocated or expanded larger special events activity in the neighborhood, as well as for more regular programming and events on a daily, weekly and monthly level throughout the year.

The City should commit resources and capacity to expanding activation and program strategies for Cal Anderson Park, possibly in pursuing a more robust partnership with the Cal Anderson Park Alliance and/or other neighborhood groups.

The City should also consider investing in Cal Anderson Park as a venue for larger event activity, including exploration of costs and steps for overcoming historical barriers for large event production within the park.

For example, interviews illuminated that a large challenge for Cal Anderson is that the North end of the park is built over a water reservoir and that the concrete reservoir cap structure is not rated for event activities. The City should work with Seattle Public Utilities to accurately rate the reservoir lid for structural capacity and evaluate opportunity and cost for potential improvements, if needed.

**2020 Cal Anderson Park objectives**

*In 2020, the City should examine the steps and costs involved in fitting Cal Anderson Park with the infrastructure, capacity and policy required for its readiness as a special events venue, including review of the reservoir cap, playfields maintenance and programmatic and equipment costs.*