

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN PUBLIC MEETING PHASE 1

Delridge Community Center: December 1, 2007

Total Participants: 9 Public, 3 Parks and Recreation Staff

Major Themes

Citizens who attended and participated in this meeting emphasized the need for Parks and Recreation to be a leader on environmental issues and health and fitness services. Citizens wanted Parks and Recreation to do a better job in defining its mission and focus leading strategies to use resources wisely.

1. What could Parks and Recreation improve?

Parks and Facilities

- Have the community centers open for longer hours
- When designing athletic fields design with the ability to add “non-traditional” sports, use color coded lines on fields to expand usage to wider range of Park and Recreation users

Maintenance

- Parks and Recreation has built new buildings and park facilities but hasn't taken care of what we have; better maintenance is needed
- Don't lose what Parks and Recreation worked hard to get by not maintaining it

Green Practices

- Need better recycling efforts from Parks and Recreation, do environmental green talks
- Use green applications, bio-diesel fuels, recycling products, and recycling at ball games

Public Engagement

- Public processes run by Parks have improved, continue this improvement
- Some public meetings are “loaded” with special interest groups which unfairly influence direction of Park and Recreation decisions
- Parks needs better marketing and outreach relevant to the neighborhood
- Need more creative, relevant marketing

Partnerships

- Improve coordination of Parks and Recreation services with nonprofits such as the YMCA, work together and don't duplicate services
- Seattle Parks and Recreation and Seattle Police need better coordination to deal with Parks and Recreation vandals, garbage in parks, and illegal stuff in bathrooms

Financial

- Will support a Park levy
- Will support annual use membership passes to fund capital improvements but be careful not to exclude the public

- Need to find a long term revenue source or private foundation
- Parks and Recreation needs to cut services across the board to reduce tax burden on tax payers
- Compare staff salaries to the private sector and reduce salaries of City employees, many are overpaid

Programs and Services

- Increase resources, including crews, staffing, and volunteer efforts to natural areas
- Expand environmental programs for adults
- Prioritize services
- Parks and Recreation has historically wanted to be all things to all people
- Get clear on mission and focus resources
- Know what other non-profits are doing and don't duplicate efforts, coordinate

2. What does Parks and Recreation do well?

Programs and Services

- Great youth programs
- Good focus on environmental programs
- Impressed by the variety of activities and services offered

Public Engagement

- Quarterly "mailer" that Parks and Recreation sends is appreciated

Parks and Facilities

- Impressive physical facilities, good variety of physical assets from pocket parks to regional parks
- Burke Gilman trail is amazing

Staff

- Staff and volunteers have worked hard to reach goals

3. What are the issues and challenges that Parks and Recreation will face in the next five years?

Maintenance

- Invasive plants taking over green spaces
- Natural areas, old trees are falling
- If tree and vegetation plan is not well managed our park lands will be threatened
- Climate change will effect trees and foliage management

Financial

- Parks and Recreation is "nickel-and-diming the public, they should stop charging for picnic tables, parking and meeting rooms in community centers
- Parks & Recreation's basic services need to be free to allow equal access
- Keep facilities open and free
- Programs should be more accessible to the public and cater less to special interest users

Partnerships

- Work with nonprofits to compete better against private health and fitness clubs

Public Engagement

- To much focus on special user groups
- There needs to be “Neighborhood Ownership” for signature parks.
- Parks and Recreation needs to manage neighborhood vs. regional interests at signature parks
- Improve Parks and Recreation’s ability to use demographic data to determine what programs and services to offer; improve response to changing demographics and how we respond?
- Get more input and support from underrepresented groups

Parks and Facilities

- Increasing demand for limited resources; there will be more use of Public facilities if the population doubles
- Illegal activities in parks
- Ability to adapt to threats in a timely way
- Parks and Recreation needs to handle encroachments of private property owners on public lands much better

4. What are the emerging trends that will drive how Parks and Recreation does business over the next five years?

Parks and Facilities

- Build trail system to link parks and open spaces, connect Alki Beach to South Park

Partnerships

- Work with SDOT on transportation plan
- Increase partnerships with non-profits, schools and churches etc
- Work with businesses

Green Practices

- Parks has the opportunity to lead environmental agenda, they should walk the talk and reduce soil toxins, encourage bike use, etc.
- Storm water retention and detention
- Look at ways to use ground water
- Global warming

Public Engagement

- Stress funding and volunteer opportunities
- Communicate better what Parks & Recreation is doing well
- Be pro-active in communicating rather than reacting to negative press
- Get out in front of messaging.
- Lots of positives and deliverables, report these out to public

Programs and Services

- Educate and lead our citizens on health and fitness—be a leader

5. What is your vision for Parks and Recreation?

Parks and Facilities

- Clean and well maintained parks and facilities
- Easily linked Parks & Recreation system with lots of paths and signage
- Replace rainbow signs and use educational and interesting facts about parks on signage instead.
- Explain relationships of land and what's happening around it
- Sustainable, forward thinking, focus on health, environment and public access

6. Other Comments on Specific Projects

- The volleyball courts on Alki Beach are used only by the volleyball clubs—this takes away from the general public
- Queen Anne Greenbelts increase access by building trails and bike paths