

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN PUBLIC MEETING PHASE 1

Note: Due to low turn-out at the first South Park Community Center Strategic Action Plan Meeting, a second meeting was held. The public input below is organized by the first meeting and then the second in order to capture all of the input received at both meetings.

International District/Chinatown Community Center: November 29, 2007

Total Participants: 6 Public, 3 Parks and Recreation Staff

Major Themes

Though sparsely attended, the attendees generally supported the role community centers play in the park system, juxtaposed with support for the continued enhancement and maintenance of the natural environments. Additional themes for discussion included marketing of Parks programs, outreach to potential users, and creation and usage of a volunteer base.

1. What could Parks and Recreation improve?

Public Engagement

- Create a volunteer base
- Marketing: better outreach to connect volunteers with opportunities, improve Parks and Recreation websites

Parks and Facilities

- Install more community gardens in parks: Reduces maintenance costs
- Better park design upfront to reduce retrofitting costs and enhance public safety
- Continue and strengthen the Green Seattle Partnership with more funding and more volunteers
- South-end equity: better maintenance, better outreach to south-end and other cultures
- Sustainability in vegetation management: Senior gardeners should educate grounds staff so they pull invasives instead of natives. Also, better supervision of contract grounds maintenance (for the same reason)

Finances

- Renew the parks levy

2. What does Parks and Recreation do well?

Parks and Facilities

- Good park sites (community centers) and affordability
- Natural area parks, such as Colman, Seward, and Discovery, appeal to every segment—keeps us in touch with nature in an urban area as seasons change.
- Lungs of the city

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- Walking on trails very restful
- International Children's Park, Hing Hay, Queen Anne parks – provide opportunities for children to play outside
- Neighborhood parks, i.e., Bradner – provide diversity of activities within the park

Programs and Services

- Diversity of programs in parks and community centers, i.e. variety of exercises for all levels, including ping pong
- Teen programs keep kids off streets
- Senior programs
- Volunteers taking care of community gardens will reduce the amount of maintenance Parks would have to do
- Basketball – OPEN GYM—these activities provide exposure to different cultures
- Seasonal/variety of programs
- Environmental stewardship programs for teens, i.e., STEPS and Trek (Bob Warner)

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

- Lack of adequate funding for staff, programming, and landscaping
- Facilities not keeping pace with population growth
- Large number of users raise sanitation/health concerns (use of hand sanitizers before ping pong play?)

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

Partnerships

- Creative solutions spawned from challenges
- Working with other city departments re: mixed uses. Community gardens (Department of Neighborhoods) in parks. Green streets (Seattle Department of Transportation) and open space. Bike and pedestrian trails (Seattle Department of Transportation) in right-of-way

Programs and Services

- Healthier population (mentally, physically) from parks programs and facilities will reduce health care costs
- Multi-cultural understanding
- People want to volunteer!!!

5. What is your vision for Parks and Recreation?

Parks and Facilities

- Healthy and positive dynamic atmosphere in parks facilities
- All age groups feel they have a place in parks programs/facilities
- Ivy-free, healthy urban forest
- Emphasis on Parks and Recreation's environmental stewardship: sustainability and its impacts

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- Implementation of skatepark plan
- Parks should provide a paintball field

Programs and Services

- An energetic volunteer force
- Provision of opportunities for users to explore activities and programs – outreach
- Regional centers: One Community center offering the same program, could be volleyball, ping pong etc, brings everyone together in one place for same sport activity

Public Engagement

- The overcoming of language barriers
- Mutual understanding and respect between Parks staff and users: pride of ownership
- Parks staff and users: Better exchange of information and potential impacts of pending decisions—clarity in public meetings, with timeframes
- Because of better marketing: public will have a better sense of what is offered

Finances

- Adequate funding and creative partnerships

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International District Community Center: January 5, 2008

Total Participants: 14 Public

Major Themes

Better public engagement to create a sense of ownership among citizens and park users was emphasized. Diversifying programs and services to meet the needs of various user groups was also recommended.

1. What could Parks and Recreation improve?

Public Engagement

- Reach out – broader demographics
- Meeting times when people are available
- Market our services better. Increase knowledge, programs and ease of attendance (Birthday parties)

Programs and Service

- Maximum utilization – resources (Community Centers)
- Creating community (e.g., table tennis program), vibrant, growing – invitation to come.
- More year-round indoor activities (rainy day).
- More outdoor programs – group runs, biking, nature walks.
- Expand Community Center hours.

Parks and Facilities

- Preserve/increase greenbelts – some are scary- (transients – threat)
- Plant more Chestnut trees

2. What does Parks and Recreation do well?

Programs and Services

- Programs – cater to individualistic needs
- Willing to work with groups – extended hours
- Collaborate with non profit sports – kids, teen programs

Parks and Facilities

- Have amazing facilities – good locations

Green Practices and Maintenance

- Good philosophy regarding environmental sustainability
- Good maintenance – improve floors, lighting, play areas

Public Engagement

- Good process
- Staff-serve, help, good hearts, very good
- Amazing resource – the best

3. What are the threats facing Parks and Recreation?

Parks and Facilities

- Greenbelts – the need for more
- Maintaining per capita space – Open Space at premium – future needs
- Loss of habitat – more pets – need to plan for increase use. For Example: Green Lake and dog poop
- Loss of parking, accessibility

Security

- Safety – undesirable activity and some drug dealing

Finances

- Economic – resources for maintenance and program levels or expansion

Public Engagement

- Lack of increase participation by the community
- Increase usage; how to protect – shared community space
- X-box youth – obesity, lack of activity
- Politics too influential – naming

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

Public Engagement

- More forward with successes
- More diverse ages and culture

Programs and Services

- Youth involvement – education programs
- Baby boomer activities that aren't "senior"
- Outings – activities not facility dependent
- Elder hostel – partner/sponsor, REI
- Family oriented programming
- Expand services w/volunteers – expand Community Center hours. Possibly lower cost to department
- Linkages between schools and park programs in off peak hours

Finances

- Private donations for programming

Parks and Facilities

- Ice rink

5. What is your vision for Parks and Recreation?

Public Engagement

- More visible, better use, create community
- A place for everyone – all ages
- ‘Friend’s Of’ sponsorship group for every park
- Corporate sponsorship – sports merchandise, etc.
- Grow community through activity – new folks
- Park function space – neighborhood related festivals – more activities – create awareness – increase programming in parks
- Move away from politics
- Instrument of socialization vs. land management
- ‘YOUR’ park – create ownership

Parks and Facilities

- Safety
- Well maintained
- Proportional resources to Community Center to reflect community needs, e.g., drop in fees to reflect neighborhood economic resources.

6. Other Comments on Specific Projects

- Enlarge International District Community Center
- Enhance computers at International District Community Center
- IDCC computers bridge the digital divide in the community