



## Department of Parks and Recreation

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners  
Meeting Minutes  
June 12, 2008

Web site: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>

### ***Board of Park Commissioners:***

Present:

Jackie Ramels, Acting Chair  
Neal Adams  
John Barber  
Terry Holme  
Donna Kostka  
Christine Larsen  
Jackie Ramels, Vice-chair  
Amit Ranade, Chair

### ***Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:***

Tim Gallagher, Superintendent  
Christopher Williams, Deputy Superintendent  
Sandy Brooks, Park Board Coordinator

Commissioner Ramels called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. **Commissioner Adams moved, and Commissioner Barber seconded, approval of the agenda as presented and minutes as corrected. The vote was taken and the motion approved.** Commissioners acknowledged the high volume of correspondence forwarded to them by the Board's Coordinator since the May 22 meeting.

## **Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Gallagher reported on several park items. For more information on Seattle Parks and Recreation, visit the web pages at <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/>.

Kinnear Park Encampment Cleanup: On May 28 and 29, City crews spent two days removing 21 tons of material from illegal encampments at Kinnear Park, located on the south side of Queen Anne Hill. Those living in the illegal encampments were notified in advance of the removal. The Superintendent visited the site today and observed a number of campsites. These will be posted again for removal. To read newspaper coverage of the May cleanup, see [http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/localnews/2004444932\\_homeless29m.html](http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/localnews/2004444932_homeless29m.html).

Motorized Event at Green Lake Park: Currently, only one motorized event has been permitted annually by Seattle Parks at Green Lake – a water ski event. However, the water wake disturbs the pied bill grebe’s nesting areas. Parks staff will bring this issue before the Park Board in late fall/early winter, possibly as a public hearing, and ask for a recommendation. To read more about the pied bill grebe, see [http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/BirdGuide/Pied-billed\\_Grebe.html](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/BirdGuide/Pied-billed_Grebe.html).

Yellow Seat Swings: Parks is working to secure funding to add 20 yellow swings in various parks this summer, with a goal to eventually have one at every playground. The yellow swings allow developmentally disabled youth, up to 160 lbs, to swing at Seattle’s parks. Seattle Parks Foundation may partner with the Department to fund the swings. To see a photo of the swing and learn more about this, see <http://www.seattleschild.com/article/20080601/SCM05/763211854/-1/SCM&template=SCMart>.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Holme on the cost of the swings, Superintendent Gallagher responded that the purchase and installation of each swing costs \$500. Adding another 20 would cost \$10,000. Commissioner Larsen asked if the yellow swing would be a replacement for an existing swing or an addition. Superintendent Gallagher answered that it would be an addition, as all children use the yellow swings.

Outreach to Seattle’s Immigrant Population: Staff continue to learn more effective ways to reach the immigrant population to learn what parks and recreation means to them, and to encourage them to utilize those resources. Some examples: in the Somalia language of Somali, the word “recreation” translates to “waste time.” And in Ethiopia, basketball courts are only found at resorts for the rich and famous. Most Ethiopians would not have access in their country to play basketball and it is a new idea for them to have that access here.

Georgetown Park Celebration: The grand opening of this newly-renovated Park is on Friday, June 13, at 4:00 pm. Mayor Nickels and Councilmember Tom Rasmussen, Chair of the Parks and Seattle Center Committee, will be there. Superintendent Gallagher invited all to attend. For more information on this Pro Parks Levy project, see <http://cityofseattle.net/parks/ProParks/projects/georgetownPlayfield.htm>.

Langston Hughes Task Force: The Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center Task Force, which includes three members of the Center’s Advisory Council, are holding a series of eight meetings on to look at how best to operate the Center. The first meeting is scheduled for later this week. Parks will bring a summary of the Task Force findings to the Park Board in late fall or early winter. For more information on Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center, see <http://cityofseattle.net/parks/centers/langston.htm>.

Park Rangers Update: All seven Park Rangers are now on board and shifts are arranged so that some of them are working in the parks seven days a week. Their work schedules will be revised when and where needed. Performance measures are also being initiated, such as how many 911 calls to SPD, type of comments, and compliments made or received by the Rangers. A primary goal is for the Rangers to become well known in the Downtown Parks. Superintendent Gallagher commented that he has been on patrol with Seattle Police Department officers and the officers are also well known in the community. For more information on the Park Rangers, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/news/detail.asp?ID=8493&Dept=40>.

Lower Woodland Skatepark Celebrates Grand Opening: On Saturday morning, June 7, Commissioners Holme and Larsen joined a large and very positive crowd of people to celebrate the opening of this new skate bowl. Superintendent Gallagher commented on the amazing skill sets of many of the skaters in the 10’ deep skate bowl. For more information on the project, see <http://cityofseattle.net/parks/maintenance/lowerwoodlandskatepark.htm>.

Madison Park Celebration: Immediately after the Lower Woodland Skatepark event, Commissioners Barber, Holme, and Larsen and Superintendent Gallagher joined a large group of people to celebrate the completion of this project. Superintendent Gallagher stated this project was a community and Neighborhood Matching Fund project, and not a project by the Parks and Recreation Department. For more information on this park, see [http://cityofseattle.net/parks/park\\_detail.asp?ID=369](http://cityofseattle.net/parks/park_detail.asp?ID=369).

Burke-Gilman Trail Damaged: A commercial truck recently hit the Burke-Gilman Trail bridge near University Village and knocked the bridge off its foundation, resulting in the bridge being closed to vehicle traffic. The truck drivers' insurance company has since canceled the policy and Parks and Recreation are now working to get the insurance to pay the estimated \$478,000 in damages to the bridge. In the meantime, funds from the West Seattle Stadium project are being used to pay for the repairs. For more information on the Burke-Gilman Trail, see [http://cityofseattle.net/parks/park\\_detail.asp?ID=476](http://cityofseattle.net/parks/park_detail.asp?ID=476).

Gun Free Policy on City-owned Property: On June 9, Mayor Nickels took steps to prohibit firearms on all property owned by the city of Seattle, including parks and community centers. His executive order directs all city departments to inventory rules, policies and leases relating to guns and directs city departments to report back to the mayor's office within 30 days with a plan to implement a gun-free policy. Seattle Parks and Recreation's Code of Conduct, currently being revised, will include language that it is unlawful to carry guns in parks. For more information on this, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/news/detail.asp?ID=8532&Dept=40>.

Disc Golf Expansion: In 1992, the Board of Park Commissioners held a public hearing on a trial program of disc golf play to be allowed only at North Seattle Park. The Board's determination included an extensive study and an evaluation of whether trees would be adequately protected. Disc golf has been played at the park since 1992 with no damage to the trees. Recently, the Department has been asked to expand the sport to other sites, especially High Point Parks. Superintendent asked the current Park Board whether it wants to revisit the issue or allow the Superintendent to make the determination to expand the program.

**Commissioner Holme** commented that this is an emerging sport and the Department's position is to encourage these newer sports and **moved to allow disc golf at other sites, as determined by the Superintendent and staff. Commissioner Ramels seconded.** Responding to a question from Commissioner Adams on whether players come from all over the city to participate in the sport at North Seattle Park, Superintendent Gallagher agreed that they do. He added that disc golf is popular in the parks system he previously worked at in California, with eight sites for play. Commissioner Kostka asked whether the turf or trees are damaged from play and the Superintendent answered that they aren't. **The vote was taken and passed unanimously in favor.** For more information and photos of disc golf, see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disc\\_golf](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disc_golf).

Commissioner Larsen asked Superintendent Gallagher to confirm that there was no other sport currently being played at that park that would be negatively affected by allowing Disc Golf. Superintendent Gallagher confirmed that there were no conflicts.

## **Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience**

The Chair explained that this portion of the agenda is reserved for topics that have not had, or are not scheduled for, a public hearing. Speakers are limited to three minutes each and will be timed. The Board's usual process is for 15 minutes of testimony to be heard at this time, with additional testimony heard after the regular agenda and just before Board of Park Commissioner's business. Two people signed up to testify.

Sharon Levine: Ms. Levine stated that she participated in a review of Seattle Parks and Recreation's Public Involvement Policy in the late 1990's and only some of the changes made to the policy from that review have been implemented. She has repeatedly complained to the Board of Park Commissioners that no one enforces

the Public Involvement Policy rules. She stated that at the most recent Queen Anne Community Council meeting there were five members who had participated in the Strategic Action Plan who were not notified about the Board's public hearing for the Strategic Action Plan. She was notified, but needed a copy of the draft Plan to review. She asked Ms. Kramer to send it to her on Tuesday of this week and had not received it by tonight's meeting. Hundreds of people participated in the Strategic Action Plan meetings and should have been notified of this meeting, either by e-mail or by U.S. mail.

Chuck Kinney: He is a Renton resident and spoke about beach fires. He looked at the City's web site today and asked if Climate Action Now is based on scientific evidence and whether it has been debated. He then read testimony he sent to the Park Board earlier in the day. He asked that the Department not get carried away with banning beach fires. Commissioner Ranade assured him that the Board had received his e-mail and that Commissioners read all the citizen testimony.

Oral requests and Communication concluded. Commissioner Larsen stated that she has attended and hosted many public meetings and one thing she has noticed is that people will write in their name and address, but very often decline giving their e-mail address or phone number. That means many people can't be reached by the e-mail distribution method. Perhaps a listserv option could be set up on the Parks website home page, allowing people to give their e-mail in order to receive all notices of any public hearings. This way they don't give their e-mail in conjunction with a specific event, but rather as an interested party in general. This would be similar to the way people sign up to receive notices of City Council agendas.

## **Briefing/Public Hearing: Seattle Parks' Strategic Action Plan**

Brenda Kramer, Seattle Parks' Strategic Analyst, briefed the Board on the development of the Department's 5-year Strategic Action Plan. Commissioners also received a written briefing prior to the meeting, as well as a copy of the draft Plan. The briefing was available to the public on the Board's web page and hard copies were made available at tonight's meeting. A public hearing immediately followed the briefing. At the June 26 meeting, the Commissioners plan to discuss the draft Plan and make a recommendation to the Superintendent.

### ***Written Briefing***

#### **Requested Board Action**

This is the third and final briefing to the Board of Park Commissioners on Parks and Recreation's Strategic Action Plan. Earlier briefings occurred on January 10 and March 27, 2008. We are requesting endorsement of the Plan by the Board.

#### **Project Description and Background**

As you know, Seattle Parks and Recreation is developing a Strategic Action Plan to establish a vision and guide decisions over the next five years. The Plan has been developed with the assistance of the consulting firm of Berk & Associates, and with substantial input from the public, Parks and Recreation staff, an Executive Steering Committee, the City Council and the Board of Park Commissioners.

The Plan is designed to serve as a work plan that identifies goals that Parks and Recreation will focus on over the next five years, as well as outline specific action strategies that will help accomplish these goals. The Plan is comprised of six goals, each with its own set of strategic initiatives, action strategies and tasks.

The first four goals are internally focused:

- Providing active stewardship for the City's parks and open spaces;
- Supporting healthy lifestyles and diversity through recreation opportunities;
- Strengthening relationships with the public; and
- Maintaining Parks and Recreation land and facilities.

The last two goals are internally focused and are dedicated to:

- Building capacity and culture within Parks and Recreation; and
- Strengthening structures and systems across the Department to more effectively serve our needs.

### **Changes in the Plan**

The majority of changes between the Strategic Action Plan presented to the Board in March and the current June version are non-substantive, organizational and tightening up changes; in consultant-speak: we scrubbed the Plan. We attempted to streamline and better organize the strategies, and in some cases clarified or added new language. The significant changes are:

- Shoreline protection and restoration is specifically mentioned in Goal 1.
- Partnerships, a theme throughout the Plan, are now specifically identified in each goal, with overall management strategies for partnerships included in Goal 6.
- Marketing and volunteer programs are enhanced with management strategies;
- Goal 2 is reorganized to eliminate overlap. It is now organized by recreation activity rather than participant.
- Goal 5 is reorganized to a more logical flow, through the employee life-cycle.

In the Superintendent's letter which accompanies the Plan, we commit to an annual implementation update to the City Council; the Park Board will receive this report as well.

### **Public Involvement Process**

An initial round of 35 public meetings was held in November and December 2007. Input from these meetings and from meetings with Department staff led directly to the Draft Plan. A second round of 35 meetings in April 2008 provided the public with the opportunity to comment on the Plan. These comments, combined again with comments from Department staff, the City Council and Executive Steering Committee, led to the second Draft Plan. In addition, public comment was provided through an on-line survey which was available to citizens in November and December.

### **Issues**

A common theme at the second round of public meetings was the complexity and bureaucratic language of the Draft Plan. This led to the streamlining and text simplification noted above. Some jargon and complexity no doubt continues, in some cases perhaps as a result of the subject matter (management systems!). We will continue to review Plan language for possible improvements.

The clothing-optional community, also known as naturists, has expressed concern about their issue not being addressed in the Plan. Parks and Recreation is evaluating their request for nudity-allowed park space and will be dealing with it as a separate issue.

The issue of how much park space should be dedicated to natural park land versus dedicated to active recreation continued to be a theme throughout both rounds of public meetings and has been raised by the City Council in a letter to the Superintendent from Councilmember Rasmussen. A specific action strategy in the plan is to create a land classification system that defines appropriate uses of and identifies the capacity of parks and open space. The Plan itself, however, does not propose criteria for making use decisions.

### **Schedule**

The Board is scheduled to discuss the Plan and make a recommendation at the June 26 meeting. After incorporating changes suggested by the Board, the Plan will be sent to the City Council, probably the first

week of July. The Council has indicated they will hold a public hearing on the Plan and consider a Strategic Action Plan resolution.

Implementation of the Plan will occur over the next five years. Staff are identifying which strategic initiatives can be accomplished within our existing budget and which will need additional resources. A general timeline for implementation is being developed.

### **Additional Information**

The earlier briefing papers presented to the Board on the Strategic Action Plan can be found in the January 10, 2008 and March 27, 2008 Park Board minutes. They are located on the web at:

<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/default.asp>

The current draft and additional information about the Plan is posted on the web at:

<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/Publications/ParksActionPlan.htm>

You can also contact Brenda Kramer, Strategic Action Plan Project Manager: 386-9094;

[brenda.kramer@seattle.gov](mailto:brenda.kramer@seattle.gov)

### ***Verbal Briefing and Board Discussion***

Ms. Kramer last briefed the Park Board in March on the development of the Strategic Action Plan. She reviewed the extensive public outreach during development of this draft, as well as the vast amount of input – from the public, Parks’ partners, staff, and City Council – that helped guide development of the draft being presented tonight:

- Parks staff held 70 public meetings on the Draft Plan since last October, with 800 people attending;
- 1500 comments were submitted on line to the Department;
- 400 response cards were mailed to the Department;
- at the Department staff meetings, comments made there generated 200 pages of typed comments; and
- The Board of Park Commissioners, Associated Recreation Council Board; Seattle Parks Foundation Board; the Department of Parks and Recreation’s Steering Committee, and City Council have all been briefed and commented on the plan. [This is the third briefing to the Board of Park Commissioners.]

Ms. Kramer next reviewed the six goals, as listed above in the written briefing paper and reviewed changes made in the Draft since the last briefing to the Park Board. She and other Parks staff briefed City Council earlier this week and the Council members gave extensive written feedback. Council is expected to adopt the Strategic Action Plan in late July-early August.

Ms. Kramer then asked Park Board Commissioners for their questions and comments.

Additional Public Outreach: Commissioner Ranade asked her to address Ms. Levine’s testimony that people who gave input previously on the plan were not notified of the public hearing. Ms. Kramer answered that the Communications Manager sent notice of the meeting to more than 700 people who gave e-mail addresses.

Deputy Superintendent added that the Communications Manager sent a press release of tonight’s meeting to the local daily newspapers and other news outlets. The agenda was also sent to the Park Board’s notification list and posted on the Park Board’s web page. Commissioner Kostka remarked that the Draft Plan is a big deal and asked if staff would send another notice to any people who didn’t receive notice of this meeting. Superintendent Gallagher commented that the Draft Plan isn’t controversial, with the vast majority of comments received being positive. Numerous public meetings have been held and the Draft has been presented to City Council and the Board of Park Commissioners. The Board could decide to hold off for

another two weeks on its discussion and recommendation [currently scheduled for the June 26 meeting; the following meeting is on July 10.] Commissioner Ranade asked that the Board give two more weeks to accept testimony. Seattle Parks staff will re-send an electronic notice to those with e-mail and U.S. mail notice to those who participated and do not have e-mail. The Park Board, which usually does not hear verbal testimony outside the public hearing, will make an allowance and hear any additional testimony on the Plan at its June 26 meeting. Commissioner Ramels noted that some people, including many immigrants, don't have access to e-mails. Superintendent Gallagher stated that staff will also do outreach to immigrant populations.

Commissioners' comments on the Draft Plan: Commissioner Kostka e-mailed her comments to Ms. Kramer, the Superintendent, and the Board's staff earlier today, as follows:

1. Make each of Seattle's over-400 parks visible to the public with a place in the budget and a named staff person in charge.

Superintendent Gallagher responded that the Department is broken into sectors and other organizational levels. There currently is no system in place to track exactly how much it costs to maintain a particular park.

2. Include a project tracking system on the Department's website that will provide (a) the phase of schedule the project is in and (b) give a contact name.

Parks' staff members have been working on this and some of the information is now available on the Department's web pages.

3. Evaluate the ecological health of all Parks' natural areas and green belts, establish priorities for attention, and begin restoration in those most needy.

The Department does not have the resources to do this, at this time. However, it will work with the Green Seattle Partnership on the suggestion. He believes it would cost \$2-3 million each year for this work.

Superintendent Gallagher commented that, as a new Superintendent, he inherited all that has gone on in the park system before him. He believes the Strategic Action Plan is not strong enough in protecting green areas; the greenbelts have been let go for the past 50 years or more. Staff members now are working more in those areas and he has had comments from neighbors who say they have never observed staff in some of them before.

Commissioner Barber commented that three years ago the Seattle Urban Nature performed an inventory of all Seattle's parks with a team of biologists. Green Seattle was started after that process and he asked if they are still involved. Superintendent Gallagher responded that the Department still has the maps from that inventory.

Commissioner Holme noted that staff members have made positive improvements recently to Cheasty Boulevard and other green spaces and he realizes there is still much to be done.

Commissioner Holme also noted that the Board has received a letter of testimony on the Draft Plan from the View Ridge community.

He stated that he is interested in the big issues and how the Department is responding at this time to suggestions received in the comments. Ms. Kramer responded that the Strategic Action Plan team has been forwarding good ideas on to project managers for incorporation.

Commissioner Holme would like to see more emphasis on the Seattle Public School/Seattle Parks and Recreation's relationship and their joint use of property. He believes the joint use policy always needs work and improvement.

He would also like to see more specifics on how the Department collaborates with sports field users. He did not read mention of the athletic field coordinators in the Draft Plan.

In addition, when he was at the recent Lower Woodland Skatepark grand opening, it occurred to him that safety is a concern at some park sites. He suggested adding 911 call boxes with a single line that would only call 911. If an emergency arises and no cell phones are nearby, help could be summoned quickly.

Commissioner Barber asked about a section of page 3 regarding community commitment with a note that it is to be added later and what that means. Ms. Kramer answered that, since the Board received the draft, that language has been added. She will send the most recent version to the Board and post it to the website. During New/Old Business later in the meeting, Commissioner Barber commented that he looked at the Strategic Action Plan on the Department's web page earlier in the day and feels it is important to have further work on the community involvement segment.

### ***Public Hearing***

The public hearing began. Commissioner Ranade reminded speakers that they have up to three minutes to speak and will be timed. The Board will also accept written testimony through Wednesday, June 25.

Sharon Levine: Ms. Levine again asked that all those who participated in the Strategic Action Plan be notified of this public hearing and asked for their input. In regard to the Draft Plan, she suggested:

- Add a section regarding how the Department's public meetings are held and include an outside facilitator for each. Make those policies mandatory and a part of the Strategic Action Plan. Ensure that staff members are trained in these policies.
- Include an entire section in the Strategic Action Plan about volunteers to help secure new park land, develop new parks, and maintain both new and existing sites. She sees an emphasis in the Draft Plan on bringing new users to the facilities; however, there are already lots of park users who want to participate more fully and she is not seeing that reflected in this Draft Plan.
- She also suggested that staff revise the distribution guideline.

There being no one else who wanted to testify on the Draft Plan, the public hearing concluded.

Commissioners thanked Ms. Kramer for the briefing. At the June 26 meeting, the Board will discuss the draft Plan and make a recommendation to the Superintendent of Seattle Parks and Recreation.

### **Briefing/Public Hearing: Summer Road Closures of Selected Park Roads**

Karen Tsao, Seattle Parks and Recreation Strategic Analyst, briefed the Board on the Department's proposal for a pilot to close some interior park roads during the summer. The briefing was immediately followed by a public hearing and Commissioners plan to discuss the pilot at the June 26 meeting and vote on a recommendation to the Superintendent. Commissioners also received a written briefing prior to the meeting, which was available to the public on the Board's web site and hard copies are available at tonight's meeting.

### ***Written Briefing***

#### **Requested Board Action**

Update briefing, public hearing and possible vote at the June 12 meeting. This is a proposal to provide an ongoing health-related recreational opportunity for the public.

#### **Staff Recommendation**

Institute a program to close interior park roads on one weekday and one weekend day each week during school vacation weeks of summer. We recommend for 2008 doing a pilot program from June 20 through



September 2, during school summer vacation, at a small number of sites at which the logistics for setting this up can be done in a short timeframe.

### **Project Description and Background**

We propose to implement a pilot program in 2008 for Seward Park, Volunteer Park, and along Lake Washington Boulevard from Madrona to Seward. These first two parks are readily accessible by transit, and their roads are in Parks jurisdiction, so that coordination with SDOT is possible in the short timeframe. Previous Lake Washington Boulevard closures have been both popular and successful. With scheduled Bicycle Saturdays and Sundays, an additional 17 days' closure of the boulevard are needed. The parks would be closed 2 days a week for 11 weeks.

After this summer's pilot program, we will develop a proposal for an expanded program starting summer of 2009, and conduct a related public involvement process. We will return to the Park Board in February 2009 to present this proposal.

### **Public Involvement Process**

The public hearing at the June 12 meeting covers the entire proposed set of closures for 2008. In addition, for the Lake Washington Boulevard closures, we will hold a public meeting June 10 at the Mt. Baker Sailing and Rowing Center to gather input from the affected residents. We will report on this meeting at the June 12 Park Board meeting.

### **Update Information**

Parks staff is coordinating with Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) on "opening" some streets to pedestrians and bicyclists proposed in a related effort, the Car Free Days component of the "Climate Action Now" program.

SDOT is proposing Car Free Days for one Sunday each during this August and possibly September at these locations:

- Alki, between the Water Taxi dock at Seacrest Park and 63rd Ave SW in West Seattle;
- Create a loop from Pioneer Square to Pike Place Market via Alaskan Way and First Avenue to Olympic Sculpture Park;
- Connect Magnuson Park to Seward Park via Burke Gilman Trail, the Arboretum, part of Montlake Bridge and Lake Washington Blvd and encourage attendees of the Pro Bike Pro Walk event to participate.

There will be the need for close coordination as park usage will be involved. For all locations, SDOT is interested in linking to special events and/or including programmed activities to enhance public awareness of the program and have a critical mass of public participation

### ***Verbal Briefing***

Ms. Tsao introduced herself to the Board and gave a very brief description of the pilot, which is a result of the Climate Action Now program and is being coordinated with the Seattle Department of Transportation. She next distributed a description of the current schedule for the "Bicycle Saturdays and Sunday" and the Proposed Expansions (shown in bold lettering), as follows:

### **Current Operations**

#### ***Lake Washington Boulevard***

- Bicycle Saturdays & Sundays 9 am-6 pm – from Mt. Baker Beach to Seward Park, May through September:
  - May 10 & 18

- June 14 & 29
- July 12 & 20
- August 9 & 17
- September 13 & 21
- Closed for some special events:
  - SeaFair
  - Shore Run/Walk

*Seward Park*

- Lower Loop car free at all times
- Thursdays 4 pm-9 pm – Upper Loop car free for Bicycle Thursdays, May through September
- On Bicycle Saturdays & Sundays the Upper Loop is currently open to cars

Proposed Expansions July through September

*Lake Washington Boulevard*

- **Add Thursdays 9 am-9 pm** as permitted by SDOT **from Colman Park to Seward Park** in coordination with Bicycle Thursdays
- **Extend current Bicycle Saturdays and Sundays** – 9 am **till 9 pm**
- **Add additional weekend days** (Saturday **or** Sunday) **9 am-9 pm from Colman Park to Seward Park**, so that every week has one weekend day dedicated to bicycle and pedestrian use (no additions on current weekends of Bicycle Saturdays and Sundays)

*Seward Park*

- **Extend hours** that Upper Loop is car free for Bicycle Thursdays – **9 am** to 9 pm
- **Add Bicycle Saturdays and Sundays and additional weekend days** on Boulevard (no additions on Bicycle Saturday and Sundays) – **9 am-9 pm – Make Upper Loop car free**

Weekends of additional opportunities (one day each weekend)

- **July 5/6**
- **July 26/27**
- **Not August 2/3, which is SeaFair weekend**
- **August 23/24**
- **August 31/Sept 1**

As is done currently, car restrictions would accommodate access for residents along the Boulevard, and for ADA, service, and emergency vehicles. Parks would notify event permit holders of restricted access.

**Volunteer Park**

**Mondays 9 am-9 pm**

**Weekend days to coincide with Lake Washington Boulevard Days**

For a map of the current route and dates of Bicycle Saturdays and Sundays, see

<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/Athletics/bikesatsun.htm>.

***Board Questions and Answers***

Commissioner Holmes attended the June 10 Lake Washington Boulevard meeting, with about 4 people present. Ms. Tsao stated that another meeting is scheduled. She has received 40 responses on the Lake Washington Boulevard changes, with 32 in favor; a few supported some elements and not others; and three believe there are problems with the closures. She briefly reviewed some of the concerns which include the

closure of Lake Washington Boulevard on a weekday and that traffic would be redirected from it to other streets.

Responding to a request from Commissioner Larsen that Interlaken Boulevard be considered for closure, Ms. Tsao stated that this summer's additional closures would be a pilot. If the pilot goes well, additional closures will be considered. Superintendent Gallagher observed that Arboretum Drive has been closed to vehicles for several weeks for construction and every evening the road is busy with bikers and walkers.

Ms. Tsao is working with the Citywide Special Events Coordinator, Seattle Department of Transportation staff, and the North and South Resource Managers in Seattle Parks and Recreation to develop the pilot. She is asking for additional feedback from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Ramels asked if residents will be impacted for access to their homes during the closures. Ms. Tsao answered that all homeowners will be notified of the closures and of access to their homes. The access will have a "soft" enforcement. Deputy Superintendent Williams commented that staff sent notice of the meetings to every home within 600' of the affected parks. Ms. Tsao agreed and stated that staff will do the same for the next public meeting. Commissioner Barber asked if the public is clear that this pilot includes Thursday closures on Lake Washington Boulevard and Ms. Tsao answered yes. She is also emphasizing that the Boulevard will be closed from Colman Park to Seward Park.

### ***Public Hearing***

The public hearing began. Commissioner Ranade reminded speakers that they have up to three minutes to speak and will be timed. In addition, the Board will accept written testimony through Wednesday, June 25.

Michael Snyder: Mr. Snyder lives in Ballard and bikes to work. He is very strongly in favor of the proposed expansion of road closures and asked the Department to look for even more opportunities to encourage biking. Interlaken Boulevard has been suggested on bicycle internet forums for closure for additional biking – even before this proposal came forth. He learned about tonight's public hearing on a biking web forum and asked that more biking groups be notified of the closures. Commissioner Ranade asked staff to add Mr. Snyder to the contact list to for updates on the pilot. Mr. Snyder sent written testimony to the Board earlier this afternoon and read it for the record.

Mr. Snyder complimented Seattle Parks and Recreation staff for maintaining the Trail area in Canal Park; however, he bikes on the Trail regularly and has noticed that portions west of Canal Park have blackberry vines and broken tree limbs growing over the Trail. He is concerned with the briars puncturing bicycle tires and would like to volunteer to help keep the Trail clear for bikers and pedestrians. [Note: Portions of the Burke-Gilman Trail are maintained by Seattle Parks and Recreation, while Seattle Department of Transportation maintains other portions. SDOT determined that it is responsible for the portion Mr. Snyder testified about. Linden Mead, City Arborist at SDOT, has added Mr. Snyder to his list of volunteers for the SDOT-maintained portions of the Trail. In addition, Seattle Parks and Recreation Volunteer Coordinator, Theresa McEwen is working with him on volunteer opportunities for the portion of the Trail maintained by Seattle Parks and Recreation.]

There being no one else who wanted to speak on the pilot, the public hearing concluded.

During New/Old Business, Commissioner Holme commented that he attended the recent Lake Washington Boulevard meeting on additional road closures. There was good input and suggestions from those at the meeting; however, this proposal is moving forward fast and he has concerns that many may not yet be aware of it. He believes the closures will be a benefit.

Commissioners thanked Ms. Tsao for the briefing. The Park Board will discuss the proposal at its June 26 meeting and vote on a recommendation to the Superintendent.

## **Briefing: Beach Fires**

Seattle Parks and Recreation's two Resource Managers, Royal Alley-Barnes and Cheryl Fraser, briefed the Board on beach fires. Superintendent Gallagher introduced and assisted with the briefing. Commissioners received a written briefing prior to tonight's meeting, which was available to the public on the Board's web site, and hard copies were made available one hour prior to tonight's meeting.

### ***Written Briefing***

#### **Requested Board Action**

- This briefing on Alki and Golden Garden beach fires – a fifteen week season from late May to the end of September – is for **informational purposes** only.
- The **issue** before the Board is whether or not to reduce, eliminate, or establish further controls on beach fires at Alki Beach and Golden Gardens to mitigate or stop the impact of this current practice on global warming and park user enjoyment. **The overall policy question for the Board** is whether it is good policy for Seattle Parks to continue public beach fires when the carbon foot emissions produced by thousands of beach fires per year contributes to global warming. The current and future importance of Mayor Nickels' Climate Action Now (CAN) Initiative begs the question of whether Seattle Parks is acting responsibly and adhering to the tenets of working effectively, in real time, to systematically reduce controllable contributions to global warming.

Further, behaviors such as drinking, associated with beach fires and the crowds they draw, continue to bring in many complaints from other park users.

#### **Staff Recommendation (if applicable)**

The preliminary staff recommendations from this briefing require no formal vote at this time. The recommendations are:

- In late June 2008, use educational press releases, public service announcements and brochures to inform the public about the significant impact of beach fire carbon emissions on global warming;
- After July 6, 2008, reduce the number of fire rings at **Alki Beach from 6 to 3** and at Golden Gardens from **12 to 7**;
- Review staff recommendations for a No Beach Fire Policy beginning in 2009 be considered by the Superintendent;
- Review staff recommendations for a reduced beach fire season and by fee based permit only at Alki and Golden Gardens also be considered by the Superintendent; and
- Schedule late 2008 public meetings/or focus groups to engage the public in discussions about the pros/cons of elimination of, or fee based permit access to, fire rings in 2009.

## **Project Description and Background**

- **Project Proposal.** A 2008 reduction in the number of fire rings at Alki Beach and Golden Gardens and implementation of a 2009 No Beach Fire Policy or fee based beach fire use at these sites.

- **Background.** Seattle Parks has provided beach fire rings for beach fires at Alki Beach and Golden Gardens for more than 15 years. In 2002, the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency issued Parks a letter for violation for allowing illegal materials to be burned at Alki Beach. The polluting nature of the materials burned in these unregulated beach fires included mattresses, wood pallets, household trash, etc.

In 2003 and 2004, Seattle Parks assigned additional staff teach beach during afternoon and evenings to improve the sites. Parks organized public information and focus groups on how to better regulate and reduce illegal burning at the beach fire sites. Alki Beach users mounted a 1,200 person petition in favor of beach fires and Golden Gardens' beach fire users sent a 100-name petition supporting beach fires. Parks received approximately 250 e-mails and letters: 22 support a beach fire ban; 228 oppose such a ban, and many support the fires with restrictions.

After the public meetings, the Board of Park Commissioners recommended reinstating the fire rings at both sites with strict instructions for Seattle Parks to educate the public on appropriate materials, regulate the way in which materials were brought into the beaches, and develop a maintenance program to ensure that the fires on the beaches were out by the 11:30 p.m. park closing time.

- **Goal(s).** The goal of the staff recommendations is the reduction and elimination of carbon emissions from beach fires and to more effectively model and implement the CAN Initiative tenets.
- **Project origin.** Beach fires have been a historical operating budget program that includes special beach fires like Christmas Ships bonfires and small fire pits located at Laurelhurst Community Center fire pit, Fremont Canal fire pit, and Carkeek Park. Parks has never charged a fee or required a permit, with the exceptions of fires that are part of fee-based programs at Camp Long and Seward Park.
- **Color photos/maps.** Alki and Golden Gardens Beach Fire Photos – rings; and rings in use – are Attachment I- Alki Beach Fires and Attachment II – Golden Garden Beach Fire Rings.
- **Policy background.** The 2002 Puget Sound Clean Air Agency fine was the impetus for Parks' examination of whether to continue beach fires, and identification of ways to regulate their use, the quality of products burned, and the number and configuration of fire rings at Alki and Golden Gardens. When Parks reinstated the program, the goal was to manage the level of pollutants. In 2008 going forward, the question is whether beach fire programs reflect the tenets of the Climate Action Now Initiative and the responsibility of cities to reduce actions that contribute to global warming.

If the Board of Park Commissioners forwards the staff recommendations to the Superintendent, public hearings will be needed.

### **Public Involvement Process**

- **Parks held public meetings** in 2002 to discuss the Clean Air Administration fine, Parks lack of compliance with clean air regulations
- **Parks advertised meetings through** press releases.
- **What was the nature of public comment at the meetings?** Public feelings about the beach fire programs ran high with more than 2,000 signatures gathered in favor of keeping beach fires and Parks regulating their use and burning materials.
- **How many people attended the meetings?** People responded by e-mail, letters and physical presence. The total number is not indicated in Park Board files.
- **Are more public meetings planned?** Yes, as part of the 2009 recommendation to discontinue beach fires and/or allow fee based beach fires.

- **Identified stakeholders:** Stakeholders have included West Seattle Sons of Beach fires, Alki Community Council, Alki residents and businesses, and individual citizens across the city.
- **Identify outreach to non-traditional users.** Parks will provide information in eight languages and shared with ethnic community centers and organizations as well as broader community based newspapers.

**Issues**

- **What issues came up at the public meetings?** In 2005 the public raised the issue that they were attached to the privilege of fire rings and beach fires and that Seattle Parks should manage the program better and not stop the program just because of the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency findings.
- **What were the issues raised by the project stakeholders?** Beach fire users did not want to be without access to beach fires and asked that Parks recognize the recreational value of beach fire events and acknowledge the Alki Community Council recommendation that Alki Beach Fires continue without permit applications, as beach fires are a unique and attractive characteristic of the historic Alki community.

**Citizen Concerns/Opposition.** We anticipate similar response to the 2008-2009 proposal as we received in 2002. Table A shows pros and cons and other possible citizen comments and concerns.

**TABLE A –2008 and 2009 Pros and Cons and Citizen Concerns**

<b>Staff Recommendation/Options</b>	<b>Pro</b>	<b>Con</b>	<b>Possible Citizen Concern</b>
2008 Reduce Alki from 6 to 3 and Golden Gardens from 12 to 7 Fire Rings	1. Supports CAN Initiative 2. Shows fire ring users that reducing carbon emissions is Parks priority 3. Effectively models the CAN Initiative tenets.	1. Users complain that this is not enough lead time for change 2. Users make fires outside rings 3. Users Fight over fire rings	1. Have historical access to all fire rings 2. Reductions inconvenient to users and not material to global warming impacts
2009 eliminate Alki and Golden Gardens Beach Fires	1. Supports CAN Initiative 2. Effectively models the CAN Initiative tenets.	1. May create illegal beach fires at these and other beaches 2. Require unscheduled staff responses to illegal fires 4. Parks may receive additional fines from Puget Sound Clean Air Agency for illegal fires	1. Reflects lack of Parks appreciation for historical tradition
2009 provide no beach fires or allow by fee based permit only at Alki and Golden Gardens	1. Still partially supports CAN Initiative with phasing in various reductions and environmental impacts 2. Effectively models the CAN Initiative	1. Not fully complies with tenets of CAN Initiative 2. Fees may have disparate impact on youth low income persons use options.	<b>1. Seattle Parks failure to discontinue programming options that blatantly contribute to global warming</b>

tenets.		
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### **Environmental Sustainability**

The benefits of the proposal to reduce the number of fire rings in 2008 and eliminate beach fires or allow only fee based beach fires in 2009 are that the carbon emission reduction benefits may be sustainable with consistent education, engagement and enforcement. Potential environmental impacts from not reducing or eliminating beach fires are a continuation of Parks' current level of environmental pollutants. In 2004 with one year of the managed beach fires, burning material pollutants changes as shown in Table A-1 below.

**TABLE A-1** Based on beach fire modeling, staff observation and estimations, and assessment of beach conditions after the fact, Seattle Parks estimates the following improvements from year 2003 to year 2006:

• 65% fewer illegal fires (990 in 06 vs. 2,802 in 03)
• 90% less burning of illegal fuel (17 tons down from 176 tons)
• 36% less gross emission (311 tons fuel down from 480 tons)

### **Budget**

- In 2008, Seattle Parks spends about \$60,000 in laborer staff to manage the Alki and Golden Garden beach fire programs. The source of funding is Pro Parks Enhanced Maintenance and 2008 Operating Budgets. See Attachment III.
- Even with the cessation of the beach fire programs, park resources maintenance staff will still need to respond to illegal fires with cleanup until the public understands and accepts a no beach fire policy as a logical element of the CAN Initiative.

### **Schedule**

- **What is the project schedule?**
  - **Mid June 2008** --Release informational education news release on forthcoming fire ring reduction at Alki and golden Gardens and reasons why
  - **After July 4, 2008**--Complete reduction and reconfiguration of existing fire rings
  - **Mid August 2008** --Schedule public process on additional actions and options for 2009
  - **Early September 2008** – identify/develop focus groups on 2009 options/ changes
- **Where are you in the overall development schedule of the project?** We have briefed the Executive Team (ET) and you, the Board of Park Commissioners on June 12. The Alki Beach and Golden Gardens fire rings have been available for use since mid May.

### **Additional Information**

CC Christopher Williams, Deputy Superintendent and Chief of Staff  
Melinda Nichols, Acting Parks Division Director

### **Attachments**

- Attachment I – Golden Gardens Photos
- Attachment II – Alki Beach
- Attachment III Beach Fires 2008 Budget

### **Verbal Briefing**

Superintendent Gallagher stated that the Department is briefing the Park Board on beach fires in order to present a summary of options and begin a discussion with the Board regarding the costs for staffing beach

fires, the resulting trash, illegal behaviors, and other issues. He apologized for the information that the discussion was primarily a result of the Climate Action Now program. At one point, it was referenced; however, the issues of concern are those of costs for staffing and cleaning up from the fires and from illegal behaviors.

Seattle Parks Resource Managers Royal Alley-Barnes and Cheryl Fraser, and Ted Baker, Ground Maintenance Lead Worker for North Central Parks, reviewed information in the written briefing and gave a short Powerpoint presentation. Mr. Baker distributed copies of the beach fire brochures that are specific to Alki Beach and Golden Gardens Parks and described the operations portion of the fire rings. The good news is that many beach fire users follow the guidelines. However, there are also many who build fires wherever they want to when all the fire rings are in use, and that is very damaging to the beach. There is a high incidence of alcohol usage at the fires at Golden Gardens. Mr. Baker encouraged the Board and audience to visit Golden Gardens Park on a warm Friday or Saturday night and observe the number of illegal fires and behaviors.

The Superintendent continued that another question before the Department is the source of the wood burned in the fires. Some people buy it at the grocery store or other such outlets; however, others bring illegal sources. An option for the Department could be to ban bringing any type of wood or other fuels into the park and have a vendor to sell all the wood.

#### Comments from Commissioners:

**Commissioner Adams** asked how the City addresses the illegal alcohol use, fires out of the rings, and burning of illegal materials at the parks. Ms. Barnes answered that Seattle Police Department is a positive partner in dealing with the alcohol use and bad behaviors; however, their availability to patrol the two parks depends on how busy they are in other areas. The officers also do foot patrols at Alki Beach. In addition, Parks and Recreation staff members inform park users on allowed behaviors and fires. Commissioner Adams asked then what can the Department do differently to manage the illegal behaviors. He has heard tonight that education has been very effective previously and urged the Department to do a better job in educating the current users. He believes this is a long-term issue.

**Commissioner Barber** asked if the air quality for those living near the fires is affected and Ms. Barnes answered that the Department follows the EPA burn ban policy of no beach fires during burn bans. He recommended that staff do further research on whether the fires affect air quality.

**Commissioner Holme** was on the Park Board in 2004 when it held a public hearing on the beach fires and does not want the Board to revisit this issue. The Board unanimously voted its support of the fires and asked for staff to monitor the fires for one year and report back to the Board. What the Board heard after the year-long probation was that the behaviors had improved immensely and the burning of illegal materials had also seen a huge decrease. He read in the briefing paper that there were 800 fewer illegal fires in 2006 than in 2003 and he recalls that the number of fire rings was increased after the Board's public hearing. He believes that the fires are very popular and are seeing an increased number of users. The Department must be willing – and have the necessary resources – to re-educate the park users every season on beach fires.

**Commissioner Kostka** asked if a reservation, like the system used to schedule picnic shelters and tables, could be use, with a maximum use time on the permit.

**Commissioner Larsen** commented that, if people have to sign up to use a fire ring, they might act more responsibly knowing their name is attached to the ring for that night. In response to her question about the funding source for the \$95,000 for beach fires, Deputy Superintendent Williams stated that the source of the funds is from the major maintenance portion of the Pro Parks Levy resulting in some maintenance being deferred in order to re-direct that money for the fires.



**Commissioner Ramels** commented that the Park Board held a public hearing on beach fires a few years ago and has already been through this. She asked the reasons for this coming back to the Board. Superintendent Gallagher stated that his intent is to have a discussion about the trash, drinking, and other negative behaviors that occur with beach fires and commented that a few people are ruining it for the many.

Commissioner Ramels asked if the \$95,000 covered the costs of the fires at both locations. Staff answered that it does and Commissioner Ramels remarked that the cost seems very low to her for something that so many people enjoy. She believes the illegal fires are a small part of the illegal behaviors at the beaches and added that even if the fires were banned that people would still go to the beaches to drink alcohol. She asked that the problems be more clearly delineated for the Board as to whether the reason for this discussion is illegal activity, smoke, or global warming.

**Commissioner Ranade** asked if the briefing is due more to the illegal fires and behaviors and trash than it is about the environment and the Superintendent agreed. Commissioner Ranade thinks it would be ideal to assign Park Rangers to these two parks. The Superintendent stated that this could be an option.

Commissioner Ranade asked how many people get fined. Mr. Baker answered that many are fined each night by Seattle Police Department (SPD) for alcohol use and by Seattle Parks and Recreation Parks for using illegal burning materials. Ms. Barnes did not have the total number of fines issues, but commented that on a recent night SPD issued 120 parking tickets at Golden Gardens Park in five hours. Commissioner Ranade suggested that the City increase enforcement at the two parks and then use a portion of the fines to pay for the beach fire operations.

Commissioner Ranade commented that this has initiated a good early discussion. He thanked the Superintendent for bringing it to the Board early in the Department's consideration. Commissioner Holme added that four years ago when the Board had a public hearing on beach fires, the air quality was a concern and there is a legacy in bringing up air quality.

Commissioner Ranade stated that in the written comments received by the Board, most people reacted to the references that beach fires affect the climate. He asked that in any future briefings about beach fires, the Department be clear that the discussion is a result of illegal behaviors and not the environment.

Commissioners thanked Superintendent Gallagher, Ms. Barnes, Ms. Fraser, and Mr. Baker for the briefing.

## **Old/New Business**

West Seattle Blog: Commissioner Ramels noted that staff from the West Seattle Blog attended tonight's meeting. The Blog frequently contains articles about Seattle's parks and is very balanced. Its website is: <http://westseattleblog.com/blog/>

Personnel Issue: Commissioner Ramels asked about the recent move of a very popular and long-time Assistant Recreation Coordinator from Alki Community Center to another community center. She has heard from several members of the community who were dismayed with this news. The Assistant Coordinator has been a help to many families and has worked there for many years, with many people very sad to see him leave. She noted that the community center staff members often build strong relationships with the community. Deputy Superintendent Williams responded that the Coordinator is being moved to another Center that desperately needs his skills and assured Commissioner Ramels that the Coordinator isn't being moved just for the sake of moving staff.

NMF Citywide Review Team: Commissioner Ramels is a member of the Citywide Review Team [which consists of representatives from each of the 13 District Councils, as well as ad hoc members assigned by the Department of Neighborhoods to review and recommend Large Neighborhood Matching Fund Projects.] She realizes that Parks and Recreation is working hard to reach out to immigrant communities and noted that one of the recent applications was from the Eritrean Community Center, which enjoys a high level of community use. The Center applied for \$100,000 to renovate adjoining property for use with its community center. Deputy Superintendent Williams noted that the Eritrean Community Center also uses some Parks and Recreation property for some of their programs. For more information on the Eritrean community events from the Seattle Community Page website, see <http://www.ertra.com/seattle.htm>.

Pool Study: Commissioner Larsen commented that she read the Department's pool study, commented that it is an excellent report, and thanked staff for preparing it.

Supernova Play Equipment: Commissioner Larsen asked how the Department reached its recent decision to reinstall the Supernova removed from the Greenwood Playground and slated for removal at several other parks. Superintendent Gallagher responded that there was an accident at Meridian Playground where a child fell off the equipment and shattered their leg in three places. Parks staff then determined that the equipment did not meet federal safety standards and the Supernova at that site and Greenwood Park were removed and plans were made to remove the Supernova at other parks. He asked staff to do further investigation and he also checked with a number of park departments that have the Supernovas. They reported no problems with the equipment. He then directed staff to re-install the equipment at Greenwood and not remove it at other parks.

Commissioner Larsen commented that this speaks to a broader question of making playgrounds too safe. She likes that her three kids can "push the envelope" on some of the play equipment at parks. Superintendent Gallagher commented that nothing can be made totally safe. Commissioner Ranade asked if the removal was caused by defective equipment and the Superintendent answered that it was not due to defective equipment, rather a staff interpretation of the safety of the Supernova. Commissioner Ramels noted that a new Supernova is being installed in one of the Neighborhood Matching Fund projects recently reviewed by the Citywide Review Team.

Video Cameras in Parks: Commissioner Kostka asked if the Board of Park Commissioners will address the recent installation of cameras in some Seattle parks. Superintendent Gallagher answered that it won't. City Council had already scheduled a public hearing on this topic and it would not be appropriate for the Board to weigh in at this time.

New Pro Parks Levy Advisory Committee: Commissioner Adams is a member of the City Council-appointed committee evaluating a new parks levy for the 2008 or 2009 ballot. He reported that public testimony will be accepted at a June 17 meeting at Seattle Center. Responding to a question from Commissioner Ramels on whether he thinks City Council will move ahead with the proposal, Commissioner Adams answered that it is still under consideration.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jackie Ramels, Vice-Chair  
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE \_\_\_\_\_