

Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
July 22, 2010

Web site: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>
(Includes agendas and minutes from 2001-present)

Also, view Seattle Channel tapes of meetings, June 12, 2008-most current, at
<http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/watchVideos.asp?program=Parks>

Board of Park Commissioners:

Present:

Neal Adams, Vice-chair
John Barber
Terry Holme
Diana Kincaid
Donna Kostka
Jackie Ramels, Chair

Absent:

Jourdan Keith

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:

Christopher Williams, Acting Superintendent
Eric Friedli, Acting Deputy Superintendent
Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

Note: *The Board of Park Commissioners meetings are taped for viewing by Seattle Channel and posted to the Board's web page. Beginning with the May 13, 2010, minutes, the written briefing paper for all non-public hearing topics will be included in the written minutes. The minutes will not include the verbal staff presentation and the Board's question and answer segment. To listen to the briefing and hear the discussion, please see the tape at:*

<http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/watchVideos.asp?program=Parks>

For public hearings (where the Board is asked to vote on a recommendation to the Superintendent), the minutes will include the written briefing paper and any subsequent updates, a summary of the verbal public testimony, a summary of the Board's discussion and recommendation, and a link to the Seattle Channel tape.

The minutes will continue to include a summary of the Superintendent's Report, Oral Communications, and Old/New Business.

This meeting was held at Magnuson Park. Prior to the meeting, Commissioners toured the Historic District and other areas at 4:30 pm. Commissioner Ramels called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm, introduced herself, welcomed the audience to the meeting, and reviewed the meeting agenda. **Commissioner Home moved and Commissioner Barber seconded**

approval of the July 22 agenda, July 8 minutes as corrected, and the record of correspondence received by the Board since its July 8 meeting.

Superintendent's Report

Acting Superintendent Williams reported that tonight's report will give a broad picture of summer events and celebrations scheduled throughout Seattle's parks. There are hundreds of events scheduled, with many free of charge. It is especially important for the Department to provide these opportunities during these tough economic times. Copies of the Superintendent's report were made available to members of the Park Board. Beginning with the August 12 meeting, copies will also be provided to the public on the agenda table and posted to the Board's web page following the meeting. To listen to the Superintendent's report, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5591062> and move cursor to position 2:15. To learn more about Seattle Parks and read more about all its events and classes, see the website at <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/>.

Community Meetings

Community Meeting at Rainier Community Center: Seattle Parks will host an evening meeting with the Rainier community to share ideas on how to better provide activities and services that meet neighborhood needs. The meeting will take place between 6:00-8:00 pm, with dinner and child care provided.

Upcoming Capital Project Grand Openings

New Seattle Storm Basketball Court at South Park: On July 23, Fight the Fear Campaign, Seattle Storm, the Seattle Police Foundation, the South Park Plumb, Level & Square Foundation, and Seattle Parks and Recreation will dedicate new basketball courts in honor of Theresa Butz who was murdered in her home near South Park Community Center last summer. The event will start at 5:30 pm.

Camp Long Renovation Re-Opening: The 2008 Parks and Green Spaces Levy provided \$1 million for the renovation of the Camp Long Lodge, including a totally renovated kitchen, restrooms and upgraded electrical. A re-opening celebration is scheduled on Saturday, July 31.

Seven Hills Park Opening: This new park, named by local school children, is a 17,145-square-foot property at the northwest corner of 16th Avenue and East Howell Street. The new park will include a lawn, concrete and gravel plazas, site furnishings such as benches and barbecues, and an art feature representing the seven hills of Seattle. The project includes sidewalk repair along E Howell Street. The tentative opening date is August 12.

Jefferson Park: On September 18, the community will join Seattle Parks and Recreation and Seattle Public Utilities for an all day party to celebrate the opening of this new park built atop the lidded reservoir at Jefferson Park, which includes a new play area, an open lawn area, new restroom, pathways, overlooks of the Duwamish, and trees.

Lake Union Park Grand Opening: This celebration will feature family fun and entertainment on both Saturday and Sunday, September 25 and 26. The new park includes an interactive water fountain, model boat pond, history trail, non-motorized boat launch, new pathways, parking, lighting, furnishings and the necessary utilities to support the park.

Permitted Special Events in Parks

Special Events Permits Issued: Permits have been issued for 600 special events and 60 major special events in Seattle Parks between now and September 10. In addition to the normal picnics and weddings, other special events include:

- Alki Arts and Crafts Fair (July 23-24)
- Uptown Stroll at Counterbalance Park (August 28)
- 25th Annual Seafair Pow Wow (July 16-18)
- Weekly Meditation at Freeway Park (Thursdays thru August 25)
- Lullaby Moon Children's Performance at Gas Works Park (9/10)
- and much more.

Major special events that have been approved by the Citywide Special Events Committee include:

- Classic & Hot Rod Car Show on Alki (July 17)
- Fat Salmon Open Water Swim at Day Street, Denny Blaine and Madison parks (July 17)
- Seafair Hydroplanes and Air Show at Genesee and Stan Sayers parks (August 6-8)
- UmojaFest Community Festival at Judkins and Sam Smith parks (August 6-8)
- Seattle HempFest at Myrtle Edwards Park (August 20-21)
- Lake Union 10K on Lake Union Loop Trail (August 22)

Free Events in Parks

Free Outdoor Movies: Three Dollar Bill Cinema and Center City Cinema will present free outdoor movies in parks this summer. Three Dollar Cinema will show movies at Cal Anderson Park on July 16 and 30 and on August 13 and 27. Center City Cinema will show movies at Hing Hay Park on Saturday nights in August.

Free Shakespeare in the Park: Greenstage Theater, based at Magnuson Park, will present 24 free performances of *Romeo and Juliet* and *As You Like It* throughout July and August in Seattle parks, including Volunteer, Seward, Woodland, Judkins, Lincoln, Discovery, Camp Long, and Magnuson parks.

Free Dance Lessons: "Dancing til Dusk," the series of Tuesday and Thursday evenings of outdoor dancing in four downtown parks (Occidental, Westlake, Olympic Sculpture Park and Freeway) provides free dance lessons. Many types of dancing styles are represented — salsa, swing, tango, blues, waltz and more — with live music.

Free Outdoor Markets: A new outdoor market just cropped up at Occidental Park in Pioneer Square, featuring locally-designed clothing, vintage wares, housewares, mobile food, and DJ music. Local art includes custom jewelry, letterpress cards, and silk-screened goods. Food includes Parfait Organic Artisan Ice Cream and Ram & Rooster Dumplings and Skillet, with its famous bacon jam. The market is scheduled for 11 am to 5 pm on Saturdays, beginning July 17 and continuing through the summer. For more information, see www.theseattlesquare.com.

Free Chamber Music: Ditch the iPod and tune into some locally made music. The Seattle Chamber Music Society will broadcast its concerts live at Westlake Park on KING-FM (98.1) at 8

pm July 16, 23, and 28. Its summer festival also will be aired on the station, beginning at 7 pm on festival dates. Concerts focus on such artists as Debussy, Brahms, and Beethoven. For more information, go to www.seattlechambermusic.org.

Free Boat Rides: The sunny days in Seattle are limited, so take advantage of them when you can. The Center for Wooden Boats, a hands-on maritime museum, offers free rides from 2 to 3 pm Sundays on Lake Union in Seattle. Space fills quickly, so sign up early, starting at 10 am, 1010 Valley Street in Seattle, 206-382-2628. For more information, call the Center for Wooden Boats at 206-382-2628 or go to www.cwb.org.

Free events at Community Centers

Concert at Alki: On Tuesday, August 3, Alki Community Center will host a free concert at Alki Bathhouse with a performance by Michael Powers, popular local jazz musician. Other performances will include jazz, pop, and rhythm and blues. The concert will begin at 6 p.m.

Alki Art Fair: On July 24 and 25, Alki Community Center will host the annual Alki Art Fair. The event will take place on Alki Beach with 65 vendor booths, a silent auction, and live music.

Concerts on the Lawn: Northgate Community Center will have free concerts every Thursday, July 15 through August 26, 6:30-8:30 pm.

Laurelhurst Community Center Salmon Bake: On Thursday, July 29, 2010, 6–8:00 pm, the community center will hold a salmon bake. The evening will include live music, a kids' carnival and jump toys.

Rainier Beach Pool and Community Center Late Night Free Swim: On July 1, a series of summer Late Night Swims began on Thursday evenings, with admission on a first-come, first-served basis.

International District Community Center: The community center will host a free "Images of China" puppet show on Saturday, July 24, from 10:30-11:30 am.

Loyal Heights Outdoor Concerts: A series of free outdoor musical concerts have been held this summer, beginning at 6:00 pm. Two more are scheduled on July 22 and 29.

Capital Project Updates & Acquisitions

Westlake Park Street Vacation Process: City Councilmember Tom Rasmussen and other Councilmembers have focused on safety and security in Seattle's downtown parks. As part of that effort, Seattle Parks is working with the Seattle Department of Transportation on transfer of the street right-of-way at Westlake Park from SDOT to Parks. Currently, Parks manages only a small portion of Westlake Park and the Park Rangers can only oversee the Park-owned portion. With the transfer of the street right-of-way, the Rangers will be able to patrol the entire park. The transfer requires the support of adjacent property owners and a City Council ordinance. Parks staff will brief the Park Board as this effort moves forward.

Cascade People's Center (CSP): The Lutheran group that previously ran a human services program in this Park-owned property at Cascades Park recently lost its funding. The nearby community has voiced concerns on what will happen with the property and Parks is committed

to ensuring a positive presence at the site. To that end, the Parks staff currently working at the South Lake Union Armory (which is being turned over to the Museum of History and Industry as the future site of the museum) will move to CSP.

Belltown Community Center: The Pro Parks Levy committed \$1.8 million for a community center for the Belltown area. Due to a number of unforeseen occurrences, a site has not been secured. Parks Property Manager Donald Harris and Terry Dunning are now looking at storefront area in the Belltown area, ranging from 2,500 to 5,000 sq. feet that would accommodate meeting and gathering space for the community. This will not be a traditional community center with a gymnasium, kitchen, etc. It will be managed like a community center, but no Parks staff will work at it. Instead, the keys will be turned over to the community council with additional keys located at Seattle Park Headquarters. Parks is working to develop a creative way to respond to the wording of the Levy and to the community's needs. As possible sites are narrowed down, Parks staff will brief the Park Board.

Discovery Park Housing: Commissioner Barber referred to a recent news article regarding the officer's quarters at Discovery Park and that those homes are being advertised for rent on Craig's list. He voiced concern about using this approach to rent the houses. He also read that Forest City, the corporation that bought the homes from the Navy, recently cut down a tree at the houses and asked how Forest City communicates with Seattle Parks. Acting Superintendent Williams responded that Parks is working with Historic Preservation to develop a set of covenants for the property between Forest City and Seattle Parks. The City does not own the property and the Superintendent has limited authority on the use of the property. The covenants will help determine boundaries. He added that Seattle Parks frequently uses Craig's List as a means to get the word out and believes it is one "wave of the future" in getting the word out to the public.

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, will be timed, and are asked to stand at the podium to speak. The Board's usual process is for 10 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 Old/New Business. Two people testified, with a brief summary of their testimony included below. To hear the full testimony, see: <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5591053> and move cursor under screen to position 23.

Marilyn Sandel: Ms. Sandel distributed a copy of her testimony. She is a member of the Magnuson Park Advisory Committee, as well as the Seattle Audubon Society. The cliff swallows return to buildings at Magnuson Park on a yearly basis. Now, they are being prevented from returning, due to development of some of the buildings. She believes that protecting these birds is an integral role of the Parks Department.

Arden Forre: He is a member of the Friends of the Naval Air Station, which is working to develop a plan for managing the many historical buildings at Sand Point (part of Magnuson Park.) He asked for the Board's strong support of this group's efforts.

Carol Fisher: Ms. Fisher accompanied the Park Board on today's tour of the historical district and found it fascinating. She noted that there are many senior citizens who live in this area and are not served by a senior center – other than the programs offered by Seattle Parks at Magnuson Park. She believes that Magnuson Park is a hub for the Department's lifelong recreation program, with 20-30 new classes for seniors added since 2008. 50% of the current enrollees are new participants. She urged continued budget support for this program.

Bonnie Miller: Ms. Miller thanked the Board of Park Commissioners for their work as volunteers. She, too, is a volunteer in both a political realm and with the Green Seattle Partnership. She began volunteering with Seattle Parks as an individual and then the Department moved towards holding large work parties. She believes that the work of individuals and small work parties are also vital to the Department and asked that the Department work to increase both of those volunteer elements. She also asked the Department to give strong support to the Green Seattle Partnership. Ms. Miller will send additional comments in writing and is scheduled to meet with Acting Superintendent Williams in the near future.

Donna Hartmann Miller: Ms. Hartmann-Miller had three topics. (1) She is very supportive of the Superintendent's report being online following each park Board meeting. (2) She noted that the City's budget process precludes the figures being shared with the Park Board or the public before the Mayor releases his proposed budget. She asked how the Board can advise the Department on its budget if it isn't privy to this information. (3) A clothing optional beach is fine with her; however, she asked that it be signed and gated so members of the public aren't taken unawares.

Commissioner Ramels thanked audience members for taking the time to attend tonight's meeting and for testifying.

Old/New Business:

Japanese Garden Tea House Contract: The Board recently received citizen correspondence on the contract for oversight of the Tea House. Responding to a question from Commissioner Ramels on the conflict, Acting Superintendent Williams reported that Nathan Torgelson, Seattle Parks Real Property manager, is working to resolve the issue.

Handicap Parking at Magnuson Park: The Board recently received a citizen e-mail complaint on the condition of the handicap parking stalls at Magnuson Park. The Board observed the parking stalls during today's tour. Parks staff will follow up on the issue.

Letter from Mayor: Recently the Board received a response from Mayor McGinn to its letter urging the City to find alternative funding sources for Seattle Parks Department and to share information about the alternatives with the Board and the public. The Board remains strongly interested in protecting the Department's programs and facilities from budget cuts. At the most recent Board planning meeting, the Board's officers and Parks staff discussed using the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee's Guiding Principals as a model for developing its own principals. These could be applied to all the Board's recommendations to the Superintendent, Mayor, and City Council.

Commissioners submitted a number of suggestions for these principals prior to the meeting and Parks staff assembled those and grouped into categories for tonight's discussion. Copies of the information were made available to the public.

To listen to the Board's discussion of Old/New Business, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5591062> and move cursor to position 34.00. Parks staff will add new suggestions from tonight's meeting and send a new version to commissioners prior to the August 12 meeting. When the guiding principles are adopted by the Park Board, it will use those to guide its next recommendations to the mayor on the Department's budget.

Briefing: Madison Valley Drainage Project – Washington Park

Celia Kennedy, Seattle Public Utilities Program Manager, and Grace Manzano, Seattle Public Utilities Project Manager, as well as Gail Staeger, consultant for this project, presented a briefing on the Madison Valley Drainage Project at Washington Park. The Board was not asked for a recommendation. Prior to this meeting, SPU staff submitted a written briefing, included in these minutes and made available to the public via the Board's web page.

To hear the verbal briefing and Board discussion, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5591062> and drag cursor under screen to position 79.00.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

- This briefing is for informational purposes.
- The project is being presented to the Board because it requires use of Parks Department land, specifically the southwest section of Washington Park.
- SPU has worked closely with Parks staff and responded to Parks Department interests during the development of the design for this project.
- The project design has been completed and the contractor for the project was given a notice to proceed on June 28, 2010.
- SPU and Parks have developed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) related to the use of that land, and SPU has completed a Revocable Use Permit (RUP) for the project construction.
- The Washington Park athletic fields will remain open during project construction, and the parking lot north of the athletic fields will not be impacted by the project.
- Mayor and Council directed SPU via ordinance to build this stormwater storage project to greatly reduce the flooding potential in the vicinity of 30th Ave. E. and E. John St. (location of some of the worst historic flooding in the city) and in the vicinity of 29th and E. Madison St.

Project Description and Background

- 1.3 million gallon stormwater storage tank, mostly below ground in SW corner of Washington Park. Tank will have attractive stone facade for visible parts of wall and artwork.
- 0.9 million gallon additional stormwater storage in landscaped bermed area near the tank to hold water in the equivalent of the 2 worst storms in 157 years of record.
- The goal of the project is to greatly reduce flooding in the areas noted above in Madison Valley.
- SPU went through an extensive process to arrive at the selected alternative which included: 1) monitoring stormwater flows in the basin, 2) developing a detailed computer and physical model of the basin, 3) carefully analyzing alternatives for costs, benefits and impacts. The community and stakeholders were included in this process and their opinions were greatly considered.
- This project was approved by Council Ordinance and signed by the Mayor in June 2008. The project has two phases. Phase one involves 1.7 mg of stormwater storage at 30th Ave E. and E. John St., not on Parks Department property. Phase 1 is now essentially complete, just some landscape touch up work is occurring.
- Phase 2 involves use of Parks Department property as noted above, as well as a new 48 inch diameter stormwater pipeline, 6½ blocks long (from 27th Ave E & E. John St. to SW section of Washington Park – see map below) that will collect stormwater from the NW section of the Madison Valley basin.
- Stormwater would only collect in the storage areas in Washington Park during large rain storms and remain for a period of hours and then flow to the existing King County combined system.
- Typically, the stormwater storage in Washington Park will be empty.
- June 28, 2010 the construction phase of the project officially began (with the NTP) and it is expected to take 15 – 18 months to complete.



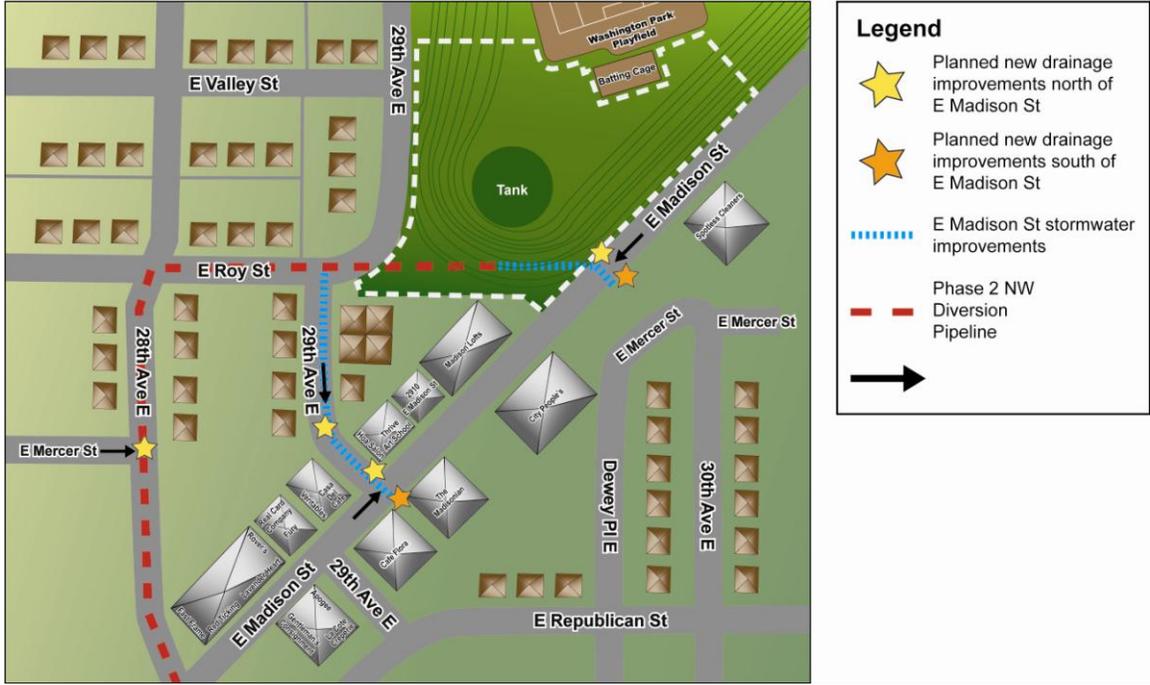
Site Overview



Photo of Current Phase 2 Site



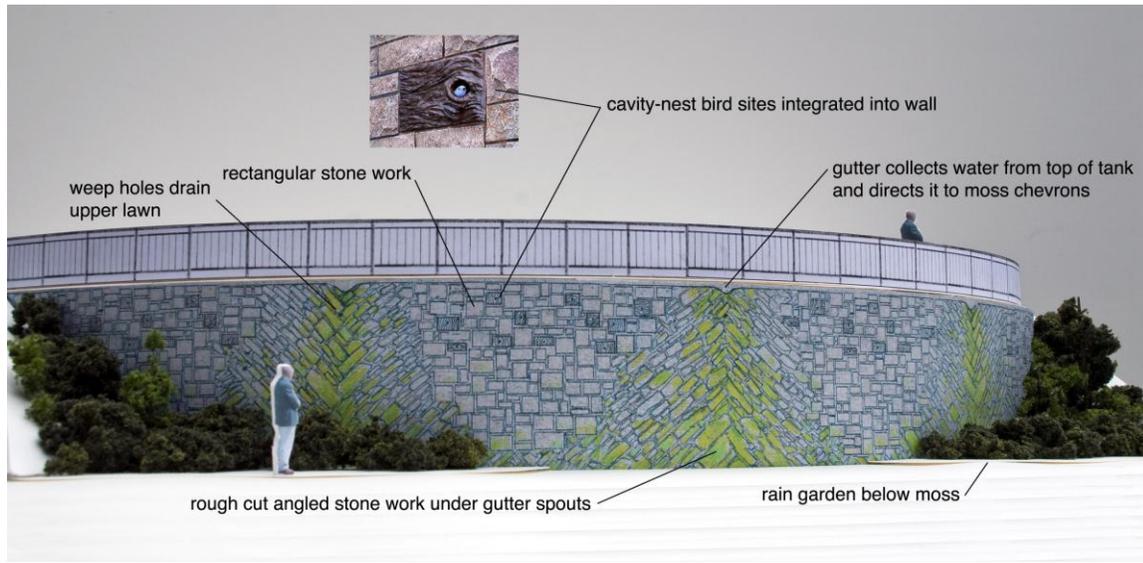
Planned E. Madison St. Stormwater Improvements



Phase 2 Landscape Plan



Phase 2 Tank Wall Design



Strategic Action Plan

- This is a priority drainage and wastewater project for SPU, and has been for a number of years.

Public Involvement Process

- Three public meetings were held at different stages of the design and drop-in pre-construction sessions are being held in late June and early July 2010. Many more public meetings were held during the alternative analysis phase.
- Stakeholder interviews held.
- Outreach to 130+ businesses & 130+ residences (fliers delivered door to door)
- Mailings to 10,000 residents and businesses for project updates and meeting invitations
- Frequent project email updates
- Project web site, hotline and email address
- Community web sites and blogs
- What was the nature of public comment at the meetings? *See section below.*
- How many people attended the meetings? *Approximately 20 - 30 for each meeting.*
- Stakeholders have included: 1) residents, 2) individual businesses, 3) Madison Valley Community Council, 4) Park users, 5) Madison Valley Business Association, 6) Seattle Parks Dept. 7) SDOT, 8) Seattle Design Commission, 9) Arboretum Botanical Garden Committee, 10) King County, and 11) Green Footprints, etc.
- Stakeholders have been included in meetings held during the planning process for the project, email exchanges, phone conversations. The project team held or participated in multiple meetings directly with the following stakeholders: 1) residents, 2) business owners, 3) Parks Dept, 4) SDOT, 5) Seattle City Light, 6) Seattle Design Commission, 7) Arboretum

Botanical Garden Committee, 8) King County, and 9) Department of Planning and Development.

Issues (focus of the oral presentation)

- What issues came up at the public meetings? *See primary issues below:*
 - Wanted project built sooner. *SPU is building it as quickly as we can.*
 - Concerns with traffic and noise impacts with construction *Project Team has worked diligently to reduce impacts as much as possible while still building the project.*
 - Wanted walking trails as part of project. *Walking trails were added into design.*
 - Requested foot access into Washington Park from E. Madison St. *This access will be included.*
 - Wanted advance communication and outreach during construction. *This will occur.*
 - Some had concerns about the shaft locations and pipeline route. *We were able to eliminate one shaft on the pipeline route to reduce construction impacts.*
- Include a subsection titled:
 - Citizen Concerns/Opposition – During the course of the public involvement process the project team believes we have addressed the primary concerns noted in the section above as much as possible. We believe the public understands that this project is needed, given the flooding that has occurred in Madison Valley in the past, and there will be some disruptions (traffic, noise, etc.) during construction.

Environmental Sustainability

- There will be truck traffic, especially during the soil excavation portion of this project, most of which will occur in a period of a few weeks and require a truck trip every 5 to 10 minutes. After the intense excavation period, then trucks will leave the site roughly every 20 - 30 minutes.
- 65 trees to be removed (24 – in poor condition, 34 – small conifers, 7 - fair condition)
- 135 new trees to be planted and other many other plantings added in.

Budget

- \$30 million total project budget for Phase 1 and Phase 2 combined.

Schedule

- Construction will begin in July of this year and the entire Phase 2 will take 15 -18 months to build.
- We are working with our contractor now to determine more details on the project schedule. We will bring our draft schedule to the Park Board presentation.

Additional Information

- Celia Kennedy, Program Manager, SPU, 684-4606, celia.kennedy@seattle.gov
- Project Website: www.seattle.gov/util/madisonvalley

Update Briefing: Seattle Park Rangers

Robb Courtney, Seattle Parks' Division Director, and Brock Milliern, Park Ranger Supervisory, introduced themselves and presented an update briefing on the Park Ranger program. Prior to the meeting, the Board received a written briefing paper, included below and posted to the Board's web page for public review.

To hear the verbal briefing and Board discussion, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=4611> and drag pointer under screen to position 14.45.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

Seattle Parks and Recreation prepared a detailed, 33 page response to a City Council Statement of Legislative Intent regarding the Park Ranger program. The Executive summary and additional sections of the report are provided in this briefing paper. No Park Board action is being requested.

Executive Summary

This report will provide a history and background of the Park Ranger Program, analysis of data pertaining to crime trends over the last two years in 10 downtown parks, a description of rangers' community involvement, a community survey and indicators deduced from that survey, and an analysis of the success of the Park Ranger Program. The report will conclude with recommendations for the future of the program.

The data collected demonstrates that after two years patrolling downtown parks, crime and negative behavior is significantly down. Police data collected from the 10 destination parks in downtown shows a decline in crime in all 10 parks between 2007 and 2009. This ranges from a 14% drop at Cal Anderson Park to a 90% drop at Waterfront Park. Public sentiment mirrors the statistical trends. In a community survey, 70% of people thought park rangers deterred illegal and anti-social behavior in the parks they patrol.

The positive trends in downtown parks are due to a comprehensive approach to increasing positive activities in these parks. Park Rangers collaborate with and support programming and maintenance activities to ensure both operate without resistance from problem patrons. Examples include: staffing all evening and night special events (e.g. dancing 'til dusk, movies in the park), patrolling at a park during daytime events, clearing patrons when work needs to be completed by maintenance staff, alerting Parks' maintenance staff to problems, and repairing safety-related maintenance issues. Working together allows maintenance and programming staff to safely and efficiently complete their jobs, and helps patrons attending events feels safer. 69% of people surveyed said they would be more likely to attend an event if a park ranger was going to be there.

Park rangers work closely with community groups to help address specific social problems and needs specific to certain groups. This includes joining the citywide youth outreach effort, hosting a youth outreach fair, and working with local homeless outreach groups to identify people in need. Informally, rangers meet regularly with several community leaders, businesses, and organizations. Park Rangers also work closely with the Seattle Police Department (SPD), attending role calls, trainings and collaborating in the field to address park specific problems. Assistance from SPD notably contributes to the success of the Ranger Program.

To build capacity in the program, rangers have increased their breadth of activities. In August 2008 rangers began bike patrols, which help increase visibility and mobility in the busy downtown. In winter 2008 rangers became instructors in Management of Aggressive Behavior (MOAB), a course teaching principles of detecting and diffusing hostile situations; 151 park employees have already attended this class. In 2009 rangers took a basic Spanish course to increase their ability to communicate with Spanish speaking patrons. Rangers continue looking for other ways to improve the program and its utility to the public.

Overall, the park rangers are playing a significant role in revitalizing the downtown parks. Letters from neighborhood groups underscore the community's desire to maintain the Park Ranger Program. (See Attachments A, B, C and D.) 82% of people surveyed believe park rangers contribute to a welcoming atmosphere and 75% would like to see the program expanded. The current trend for world class cities is to have a dedicated group of park rangers to patrol the parks. Park rangers deter negative behavior, increase safety and the perception of safety, and free up police time to tend to public safety issues outside the parks. The detail in this report will demonstrate thoroughly the need and effectiveness of the Park Ranger Program.

Background

In 2008 the Seattle City Council approved a Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) 114-1-A-3 calling on Seattle Parks and Recreation to conduct an evaluation of the Park Ranger Pilot Program. In 2009 the Council approved SLI 77-2-A-1 which provides more detailed guidance on the City Council's expectations for that evaluation and calls on Parks to "provide a report and briefing, detailing the parameters of the program evaluation, to the Council's Parks & Seattle Center Committee by Monday, February 8, 2010."

Parks briefed the Council's Parks and Seattle Center Committee on its approach to the SLI at the February 18 meeting and received comments from the committee members and Council staff about it. The briefing also included information on the Center City Parks Task Force work and park rangers' activities. There was general concurrence that the Department's proposals was an appropriate way to proceed. Based on that input, Parks has gathered information from the various sources discussed and, in this full report due July 1, 2010, presents the analysis and conclusions from them.

Councilmembers also expressed support for the Center City Parks Task Force strategy, in which the rangers play an important role: promoting *park safety, security and civil behavior*; supporting *park operations and maintenance* by calling in work orders; supporting *park programming, special events and commercial activity* through their presence at events and their contact with neighboring businesses; and providing key representation for *community outreach, involvement and partnership*. These strategies are synergistic, and their combined effect is growing with time.

Center City Parks Task Force Framework

The Park Ranger Program was established in 2008 as a key piece of the Center City Task Force Recommendations, as presented in the 2006 Downtown Parks Renaissance Report that proposes actions to revitalize downtown parks. The Task Force was established and prepared the Renaissance Report (<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/downtown.asp>) to address the perception and reality that downtown parks were unsightly, underutilized, and illegal behavior was persistent. The Renaissance Report covers three critical components – maintenance, programming, and security – the first two conducted by Parks maintenance crews and Parks Center City programming office, respectively, in collaboration with the park rangers. There is also coordination of effort on the plan with the Metropolitan Improvement District’s (MID) ambassadors and Seattle Police Department (SPD). These are coordinated and ongoing efforts to build the downtown parks into welcoming gathering points for the community.

The purpose of the Park Ranger Program is to improve the real and perceived safety and comfort of those who visit the Center City parks. The implementation of the Park Ranger Program is one of several recommended actions taken to improve the appearance and presentation of Center City parks, including activation through increased quantity, quality, and diversity of events, making physical improvements to the parks, and the addition of security via Park Rangers and the improved presence and patrol by the Seattle Police Department.

The Task Force strategy is designed to be comprehensive, as simple enforcement leads mainly to displacement of negative behaviors from parks to other areas of downtown. As negative behaviors stem from social problems and are not restricted to parks, Seattle Parks and Recreation recognizes our limited ability to control those factors, including economic stress, lack of adequate inventory of low-income and transition housing, location of human service providers, substance abuse, and mental health treatment issues. With those considerations, Seattle Parks and specifically park rangers work collaboratively with several outreach groups, Seattle Police, and the MID to address social issues.

The Park Ranger Program

Implementation of the Park Ranger Program has been dynamic, responding to both changing conditions and deeper understanding of the parks and the communities they serve. The park rangers review and adapt their activities and emphasis at least quarterly. Since May 2008, the park rangers have enhanced their effectiveness by gaining the authority to issue park exclusions (June 2008) and Notices of Civil Infraction (August 2009). However, these are secondary to enforcement by presence and interactions with patrons. The program provides the consistent presence of professional, knowledgeable, and uniformed staff seen by all segments of the public in support of civility.

Park rangers patrol in two-person teams, focusing their efforts in 10 downtown parks to deter crime and anti-social behavior by contact with individuals whose behavior interferes with others enjoying the parks. From spring to fall, the two shifts cover daylight hours between 6 a.m. and 8:30 p.m., going later for event or community meeting coverage. In winter, coverage is generally from 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Patrols are mixed, including bicycle, foot and vehicle. The patrol routes are flexibly scheduled to respond to current conditions, such as troubled areas, to assist at activities, such as community events, and to avoid predictability which scofflaws might rely on.

Chronology of Park Ranger Program implementation:

- January 2008 Park Ranger Pilot Program funded
- May 2008 Park rangers begin patrol in downtown parks
- June 2008 Park rangers given authority to issue notices of park exclusion
- August 2009 Park rangers given authority to issue notices of park code civil infraction
- February 2010 Program evaluation plan due
- July 2010 Park rangers evaluation report due

The 10 parks that Rangers patrol include:

1. Cal Anderson Park (including Bobby Morris Playfield)
2. City Hall Park
3. Freeway Park
4. Hing Hay Park
5. (South) Lake Union Park
6. Occidental Square
7. Pier 62/63
8. Victor Steinbrueck Park
9. Waterfront Park
10. Westlake Park

Some important focal points of the program are:

- Patrol during times and at locations of highest activity.
- Staff special events and programs to facilitate a safe and welcoming atmosphere for facilitators and attendees.
- Train Parks and MID staff and community members in Management of Aggressive Behavior (MOAB), a nationally recognized training to improve the safety of staff and patrons.
- Contact stakeholders in the downtown area to best carry out our mission, and to support them.
- Provide information to tourists about Seattle, attractions, eateries, and events.
- Advise park employees on safety and security concerns.
- Conduct outreach with homeless, underprivileged youth, chemical dependents, and interface with the agencies that support them.
- Work with maintenance staff to expeditiously correct maintenance problems.
- Perform minor maintenance to parks as related to safety concerns.
- Collaborate with Parks' maintenance staff when situations present difficulty for them to perform job functions.
- Coordinate with SPD to best perform the job functions of both agencies.

Additional Information:

Karen Tsao: karen.tsao@seattle.gov

Brock Milliern: brock.milliern@seattle.gov

Discussion/Recommendation

Following the verbal briefing Commissioners voiced their support of this program.

Commissioner Kincaid moved that the Board highly recommends the permanent

expansion of the Park Ranger program. Commissioner Holme made a friendly amendment to include “based on the outcome of this report.” Commissioner Kincaid accepted the friendly amendment. The vote was taken with Commissioners Adams, Holme, Kincaid, Kostka, and Ramels in favor. Commissioner Barber abstained. Motion carried.

The Board thanked Parks staff for the briefing and for the good work of the Park Rangers.

Additional Old/New Business

Consideration of Longer Park Board Meetings: Commissioner Ramels voiced concern that the Board’s two-hour meeting length is inadequate for the amount of agenda topics. She suggested the Board discuss holding 2-1/2 hour meetings, from 6:30-9:00 pm. Commissioner Holme suggested that the Board, instead, hold two annual retreats and keep its meetings at two hours, with a start time of 7:00 pm. Commissioner Kincaid asked if a 7:00-9:30 pm schedule might work. Acting Superintendent Williams suggested that no more than two agenda topics be scheduled at the Board’s meetings.

It was agreed to continue this discussion at the August 12 meeting.

There being no other new business, the meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
Jackie Ramels, Chair
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE _____