

Minutes

Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners

Via WebEx

Thursday, October 28, 2021

6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Welcome and Introductions

Kelly calls the meeting to order at 6:35pm. The Board members and SPR staff introduce themselves.

Public Comment

Elizabeth Riggs – co-founder of Save Evans pool and Green Lake Community Center; work to get buildings repaired and eventually replaced. Schematic design occurred in 2019 with good public outreach; \$4-5mil over next 2 years to make design shovel ready when economy recovers.

Brice Maryman – Thanks SPR staff for the Stay Healthy/Stay Safe streets during the pandemic for keeping Lake Washington Blvd closed for additional recreation opportunities. Budget proviso to have SDOT do further study to make the change permanent. Would love the Board's support in this.

Tim Motzer – Lake City resident to follow-up on park district funding cycle. The Park District property tax should be increased. Please review the materials he provided to inform your work moving forward.

Superintendent's Report and Response to public comment

Thanks the commenters for their advocacy and efforts on behalf of SPR programs and projects.

SPR

- Proof of vaccination: SPR is requiring proof of vaccination to enter any facility.
- Employee Safety and Wellness Week: SPR Human Resources staff are offering trainings in Stress management, coping with change, managing aggressive behavior, and others.
- SPR Budget Responses: SPR staff are working with the City Budget Office to address budget questions from the City Council.
- Robert Stowers leaves for a new opportunity: Long-time SPR employee and wearer of many hats is leaving to pursue an opportunity in Connecticut.

Parks and Environment Division

- Wind Storm Impact: The tree and grounds crews have been busy over the last few days cleaning up after the recent windy, stormy weather. Since Sunday, Oct. 24th we've had at least 65 tree failures at 38 park sites around the city.
- Green Lake recently stocked with 15,000 rainbow trout.

Recreation Division

- Pools Reopen: Meadowbrook and Ballard pools are open for coached swims, lap swims and fitness.
- New Deputy Director of Recreation: Daisy Catague was most recently a Strategic Advisor in the Planning and Development Division and past winner of the John C. Little Award.
- Seeking 2022 Art in Parks Program Applications: SPR is partnering with Office of Arts and Culture to increase arts and community events in parks. Application deadline is December 1.

Planning Development and Maintenance Division

- Lakewood Playground Opens
- Marra-Desimone Park is nearing completion – accessible pathways, benches, picnic tables, drainage improvements and more! All with a lot of input from local community.
- Lake Union 'Geese B Gone': lights installed to deter geese. Apparently, they do not like it and we don't notice it.
- Jefferson Community Center Project to Start Construction – substantive renovation expected to start in 2022.
- N. Rainier Land-Banked Site Development: this future park is the culmination of several purchase over the years and will be over an acre in size. SPR is applying for grants to fund development of this site with construction tentatively scheduled for summer 2022.

Finance and Administration Division

- Amy Yee Tennis Center is starting up again with mask and vaccine requirement. Received a grant from the United States Tennis Association for outreach.
- Vaccine Requirements: Volunteers and contractors will be required to have vaccines.
- Staff Schedule events at Hanger 30: Rentals have increased for Hanger 30.

Policy, Performance & Property

- Biannual Statistically valid park and recreation user survey: The survey includes questions about safety, maintenance and cleanliness, availability of recreation services and facilities and parks and open space, level of visitation at a range of SPR amenities, investment priorities, and key factors influencing user experience.
- Park District Board meeting and Public Hearing: October 18, SPR presented their budget to Park District Board (City Council).
- Golf: SPR set an all-time record for rounds played; people seem to be enjoying golf during the pandemic.

Presentation, Public Hearing and Possible Vote: Green Lake Use Change

Briefing Paper

MEMORANDUM

Date: October 21, 2021
To: Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners
From: Selena Elmer, Strategic Advisor, Seattle Parks and Recreation
Subject: Long-Term Temporary Use Change on Green Lake Inner Loop

Requested Board Action

The Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners will hold a public hearing on Thursday, October 28 about a proposed long-term use change on the inner loop at Green Lake Park to restrict bicycles and other wheeled uses. This use restriction has been in effect since April 2020. SPR is seeking to implement a longer-term temporary use change until the Seattle Department of Transportation can complete analysis and community engagement regarding building a complete outer loop for bicyclists around Green Lake. At the upcoming meeting, SPR will be seeking input from the public about this use change, and pending input received, potentially seeking a recommendation from the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners on this recommended policy change.

Proposed Policy Change

SPR is proposing to restrict all bicycles, skateboards, roller blades, and other wheeled recreation uses from using the inner loop at Green Lake Park until further notice. This would not apply to a person with a disability who uses wheeled equipment or people walking with strollers. This use change requires modifying Seattle Parks and Recreation Policy 060-P 7.13.1.1 – Supplemental Use Guidelines for Green Lake Park Green Lake Courtesy Code (Appendix 8.1, referenced in Section 4.3.5). The official use change SPR would file with the City Clerk's office is outlined in Attachment 1.

A version of this restriction has been in effect since April 2020, which SPR has been renewing through an emergency rulemaking procedure which expires every sixty days. This proposed longer-term temporary policy change would keep this temporary use restriction in effect until the Superintendent deems it appropriate to take further action. This longer-term change is intended to provide time for the Seattle Department of Transportation to complete supplemental analysis about creating a complete outer loop around Green Lake with protected access for bikers and pedestrians, which is anticipated to be complete in the next two to three years.

Consistent with prior precedent and rulemaking procedure laid out in the Seattle Municipal Code, SPR posted formal notice about this public hearing in the Daily Journal of Commerce on September 28 and issued a press release and Parkways blog post on the same day, which was circulated to the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners listserv.

Background

History of Green Lake Use Change

In April 2020, early in the pandemic, SPR temporarily restricted bicycles, roller blades, and other wheeled forms of recreation from the inner loop at Green Lake Park and directed all foot traffic to travel in one direction. The Green Lake inner loop is consistently one of the most heavily used amenities across SPR's system. When COVID-19 first emerged, there was a Citywide effort to implement policy changes and augment physical infrastructure to facilitate safe public access to outdoor amenities, which included considering measures to prevent crowding and ensure visitors could maintain safe social distancing

when using SPR amenities. Initially, SPR both restricted wheeled recreational uses on the inner loop and required all pedestrians to travel the same direction along the inner loop. Effective July 30, 2021, SPR relaxed the one direction requirement, and pedestrian traffic is now allowed in both directions on the loop.

This use change at Green Lake was one of a suite of measures SPR put in place to reduce crowding and ensure SPR's outdoor amenities could remain open for safe public use and enjoyment during the pandemic. Other measures included posting information signage, disseminating key messaging via social media, adjusting park hours, deploying Social Distance Ambassadors to monitor use of major regional parks, restricting activities that promote larger gatherings like beach fires and picnic shelter rentals, and more. Another strategy to increase access to open space was undertaken jointly with the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) through an extension of the Stay Healthy Streets initiative specific to roadways adjacent to parks. This joint effort, called Keep Moving Streets, included [closing a stretch](#) of West Green Lake Way North between North 63rd St and E Green Lake Way N to vehicle traffic from May 2020 to September 2021. The goal of this program was to open up more space for people rather than cars as a way to provide more space for people to get outside adjacent to parks and to improve community and individual health.

Public Reaction

Public reaction to the use restrictions at Green Lake has been mixed. SPR has not conducted any tailored outreach related to the use change but has received periodic comments through social media, our central email address, and resident phone calls. Early in the pandemic, the feedback was largely positive as park users felt that moving one direction and limiting use to pedestrians assisted with social distancing in a time of great uncertainty. As the pandemic progressed, SPR has received many requests for clearer and more permanent signage, as many temporary signs have been removed throughout the pandemic. Several residents expressed strong support for restricting wheeled uses, feeling that the mix of bikers, roller bladers, and pedestrians results in unsafe situations and crowding. Others have indicated skepticism about the effectiveness of this change without enforcement, citing that bikers still use the loop and don't stay in their designated lane, possibly creating more hazardous situations.

Prior Discussion with Board

SPR staff briefed the (then) Board of Park Commissioners about this use change in January 2021, seeking input on whether to continue with the emergency rulemaking procedure or pursue a longer-term temporary rule change. At that time, the Board recommended continuing with the emergency procedure until the path to recovery from the pandemic was clearer. Since that time, the emergence of the Delta variant has extended uncertainty regarding the length and severity of the COVID-19 pandemic, a new protected bike lane around the east side of the lake has been completed, and additional plans for further analysis of a potential full outer loop around the lake have been formed (see below).

Concurrent SDOT Activity

In parallel with Citywide activities to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, SDOT was completing the [Green Lake and Wallingford Paving and Multi-Modal Improvement](#) project, which included building

a new 2-way bike lane around the lake, among many other improvements (map included to the right).

Through community engagement related to this project, SDOT staff have heard many comments from community who are interested in creating a full outer loop for users to walk and bike around the lake, including potentially repurposing the eastern-most lake of Aurora Ave N adjacent to the lake. SDOT staff plan to conduct additional community engagement and analysis to understand what may be feasible before sharing outcomes and concepts with Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), SDOT’s partner in this corridor.

Public Involvement Process

At this point, SPR has not conducted any community engagement specific to this issue. SDOT has conducted significant public engagement in support of the Green Lake and Wallingford Paving and Multi-Modal Improvement project and hopes to build on this work by talking with neighbors about opportunities to expand a walking and biking path connecting around the lake. SDOT staff will hold a virtual open house on Tuesday, November 9th to share project information to community and get feedback and are also developing a community survey for additional input.

SPR Recommendation

SPR recommend implementing this temporary use change on a longer-term basis while SDOT completes its analysis and public engagement regarding a potential full outer loop and basing the longer-term use of the SPR inner loop on the outcomes of that process.

Attachments

Draft Amendment to Supplemental Use Guidelines at Green Lake Park (next page)

TO: Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk



SDOT map of recently completed improvements around Green Lake

FROM: Jesús Aguirre, Superintendent
DATE: [MONTH] [DAY], 2021
Topic: Amendment of Supplemental Use Guidelines at Green Lake Park

WHEREAS, as the City of Seattle continues responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the rise of new variants, Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) remains focused on ensuring safe access to outdoor space; and

WHEREAS, limiting the uses of the Green Lake inner loop path to pedestrians only creates more space for path users and the ability to social distance given the high use on the trail; and

WHEREAS the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) is working to study the feasibility of a full outer Green Lake biking and walking loop, building off the recently completed [Green Lake and Wallingford Multimodal Paving Project](#); and

WHEREAS the completion of this project would significantly reduce the crowding on the inner loop due to competing uses including bicycles and other wheeled uses; and

WHEREAS pursuant to the procedure set forth in SMC 3.02.030 section C, the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners held a public hearing on October 28, 2021 affording all interested persons an opportunity to present data, views, or arguments in regard to this proposed action; and

WHEREAS pursuant to the procedure set forth in SMC 3.02.030 section A, notice for that public hearing was posted in the Daily Journal of Commerce and on Seattle Parks and Recreation’s website on September 28, 2021, exceeding the requirement of posting notice 10 days prior to the public hearing and 14 days prior to this action; NOW, THEREFORE,

Pursuant to the authority under SMC 18.12.040 sections B and G, I, Jesús Aguirre, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, do hereby amend SPR Policy 060-P 7.13.1.1 – Supplemental Use Guidelines for Green Lake Park ([Clerk File 321447](#)) Green Lake Courtesy Code (Appendix 8.1, referenced in Section 4.3.5) to restrict all bicycles and other wheeled uses from the Green Lake Park inner loop. This restriction does not apply to a person with a disability who uses wheeled equipment or the use of strollers.

This use change will remain in effect until such time as the Superintendent deems it appropriate to take further action.

Signature

Date

Presentation

Selena reminds the Board about the initial use change prohibiting wheeled recreation at the beginning of the pandemic in April 2020. Staff have continued to renew this permit every 60 days. Now, SPR would like to make a longer term temporary change to the inner loop continuing to prohibit wheels on the path.

SPR has not conducted specific outreach or engagement on this topic but has received mixed feedback from the public.

SDOT made a lot of improvements around the lake in the right-of-way with a protected bike lane. They also completed a shared walking/biking path on W. Green Lake Way.

SDOT is launching a Green Lake Outer Loop project to gather feedback on expanding a walk/bike path connection around the lake in the right-of-way. They are also considering more improvements to W Green Lake Way N.

Community members can email GreenLakeOuterLoop@seattle.gov to be kept in the loop (pun intended).

Temporary Rule Change proposal: included in briefing paper above.

Public Comment

David Ward: Pedestrian and cyclist on Green Lake for years; designed for both wheels and walkers with equal rights to the inner loop. In 1997, SPR tried to eliminate bicycles on the inner loop. It is not pleasant to bike on the outer loop.

Board Discussion

The board members are interested in hearing the results from SDOT's engagement. Non-motorized vehicles are not prioritized and cautions against predicating SPR actions on SDOT finishing their work. They also suggest that SPR staff could get some feedback from the Green Lake users in person.

The through-riders would prefer to be on the outer loop, but those who want to ride around Green Lake want to enjoy the park.

Skaters/rollerbladers do not seem to pose the same problem as cyclists.

The Board wants to know if there is an uptick in safety incidents on the inner path or to understand the reason SPR wants to make this change. Michele responds that it provides more time to figure out a policy decision.

The Board questions if they could be more flexible to allow for small wheels. Superintendent Aguirre feels that is riskier until more data is found. This would give emergency power in perpetuity and there is concern about no expiration date.

The outer loop is too narrow to host all wheeled recreational vehicles and isn't suited for roller blading or skateboarding.

SPR leadership is in regular communication with SDOT leadership.

Commissioner Akita summarizes the concerns of the Board and the reasoning from SPR staff; she suggests they continue this policy as proposed provided that SPR staff return in 6 months to provide data from SDOT and consider the long-term policy.

Superintendent Aguirre could make the changes without Board recommendation, but prefers their buy-in. He could agree to return in 6 months to update the Board. His preference is to sign a new policy that allows for him to make the change.

Motion: "The Board recommends the Superintendent extend the temporary rule change currently in effect for the Green Lake inner loop and return to brief the Board on engagement done in partnership with SDOT, related analysis and potential next steps in approximately 9 months (July 2022)."

The Board approves the motion unanimously.

2020 RSJI Report

B Hill says SPR is working to become an anti-racist organization and equity-centered. Society shift in context due to the pandemic which highlighted and exacerbated existing inequities and racism.

Programs focused to:

- Community showers & shelters
- Childcare for those furthest from educational justice and teen hub support
- Enhanced cleaning of facilities & restrooms
- Focus on keeping parks open while supporting public health and safety
- Virtual programming aimed at most isolated
- Outdoor programming/activation

Pathway to Equity – SPR recognizes that to support and invest in BIPOC communities, this work must be rooted in equity. 2019 SPR adopted Pathway to Equity framework – recentering SPR work to overcome structural and systemic racism and historic disparities for communities and workforce to become a transformational, anti-racist, equity-centered organization.

Uses these pillars: learning and advocacy, training, normalizing and operationalizing anti-racism in daily culture.

2020 Accomplishments: Internal Capacity Building

- Continued building of Pathway to Equity
- Equity Innovation Labs
- SPR's Anti-Racist Actions Commitment
- Foundations of Change & LEAP
- Development of Equity Engagement and Equity Analysis Tools
- Change Team co-lead dedicated hours
- SPR Stats
- WMBE Utilization
- Affinity Group Framework Development

2020 Accomplishments: Service and Program Equity

- Supporting academic success with middle and high school students
- Keeping youth safe and healthy
- Community-centered programs
- Health

2020 Challenges

- Impact of covid-19 on community engagement, staff infrastructure and dedicated time frontline staff for RSJ training.
- Fought this through being intentional about training and development opportunities.

2020 Equity Analysis Tool Utilization

Equity Analysis Tool Development & Refinement

- Equity Impact Filter
- Recreation Programming Tool
- Budget Analysis Tool
- GIS/AMWO Equity Mapping
- Planning, Development, Maintenance Equity

Racial Equity Toolkits:

- Red Barn Ranch – The goal was to build wealth in under resourced communities. Designing a process to incorporate community voice that is equity-centered.
- Cal Anderson Community Engagement – focused on BIPOC voices; robustDevelop and reinforce a diversity, equity,
- and inclusion infrastructure by establishing a framework that supports, maintains, and enhances a vibrant community

- #2: Initiate dialogue within SPR Workforce about racism on an individual, group, institutional, and structural level (addressing the four types of racism: internalized, interpersonal, internalized, institutional, and structural) outreach through multiple channels.

Spirit of RSJI – Building a Relational Culture - Space created to share anger, care and joy through monthly staff meetings.

Presentation: Race & Social Justice Initiative Change Team

Office of Civil Rights leads the citywide effort. They meet monthly to provide tools for department use.

They review the RSJI Change Team mission: To end institutional and structural racism and inequities in SPR.

2021 RSJI Change Team Goals – informed by UW Evans School study.

- Develop and reinforce a diversity, equity, and inclusion infrastructure by establishing a framework that supports, maintains, and enhances a vibrant community
- Initiate dialogue within SPR Workforce about racism on an individual, group, institutional, and structural level (addressing the four types of racism: internalized, interpersonal, internalized, institutional, and structural)

SPR RSJI's Evan's School Study

- Revisit the Change Team purpose, activities and communicate
- Strengthen connection with Office of Civil Rights & Mayoral Office
- Increase access to tools and language for RSJI at SPR
- Develop better tools or amend Racial Equity Toolkit (RET)
- Hire a RSJI team
- Create an apprenticeship program
- Introduce accessible and mandatory trainings
- Rebuild trust in the Department, especially HR
- RSJI into workplan, interview, and job announcement
- Find opportunities for RSJI discussions on intersectionality and other identities
- Develop an accountability system

RSJI Change Team Road Shows – Engagement with each division.

SPR's Future of Work: Employee Engagement
Themes & Recommendations for Planning from Synthesis

- Flexibility is Personal
- Center Employee Well-Being – include staff in decision-making
- New Workplace Culture – values innovation and creativity; new norms for cohesion and collaboration; bust up internal silos of power and practice.
- Safety First
- Prioritize Equity & Fairness – universal application of RSJI toolkits; SPR staff mentioned a caste system in SPR, especially in regards to remote work.

Commissioner Watts is looking for performance measures to increase equity. There are performance metrics for equity work from staff as part of annual review process. Superintendent Aguirre says being anti-racist is a way of being and not a check on a checklist. He is proud of the department for their efforts. SPR is continuing to invest in more staff to push the needle further.

Old/New Business

Commissioner McCaffrey reviews the upcoming schedule: November 16 is the retreat. Next meeting on December 9.

There being no other business, Commissioner McCaffrey adjourns at 8:50pm.