



## Strategic Plan Implementation | Summary of Feedback Received to Date

*Biweekly summaries of feedback received through our engagement activities. The three summaries included below cover activities from August 16 – September 26. This was distributed via SPR's Strategic Plan newsletter. To receive future updates, [sign up for this newsletter](#).*



**Seattle**  
Parks & Recreation

## Strategic Plan Implementation Update

In mid-August, Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) launched community engagement to support implementation planning for our [2020-2032 Strategic Plan](#). This newsletter will report out on where we've been and high-level takeaways of what we're hearing through this work every two weeks, with this edition focused on engagement activities and feedback received between August 16 – August 29. We are also posting all the raw data we receive through our various engagement activities on our [Strategic Plan website](#) so our community can take a deeper dive into the detailed feedback we are receiving and processing.

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### Strategic Plan Background

SPR's Strategic Plan lays out priorities and direction for the department over a 13-year period. SPR paused implementation planning when we pivoted to emergency pandemic response in early 2020. Over the past 18 months, Seattle has experienced dramatic change – a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic, racial reckoning, economic downturn, and increasing impacts of climate change.

Many of SPR's core services bring people together to share space and build community. To support the community in response to the crises of 2020 and help shape our short-term budget priorities and operations, we are seeking to engage with communities we serve about how their needs have shifted since the pandemic. We need to better understand how community needs and priorities have changed, particularly for those disproportionately impacted by these crises.

August 16-29, 2021



*{Image Description: The top bar of the welcome page of the Seattle Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan Implementation online open house website, which includes a photo of a woman walking, youth playing basketball outdoors, a young girl holding up an art project, a Zumba class, forest restoration efforts, and a kayaker on a lake. It also shows the dates of the Online Open House from August 27 – October 13 and shows the navigation menu of the page.}*

## Online Open House

On Friday, August 27, SPR launched an [online open house](#), which features key details about the 2020-2032 Strategic Plan, examples of how SPR is responding to the four crises we face: public health and well-being, a nationwide racial reckoning, economic uncertainty, and the increasing impacts of climate change, and a survey seeking community input on how SPR can serve our community's changing needs in the years to come. The input received will inform our short-term action planning and the development of financial priorities for the 2023-2028 cycle of the Seattle Park District. The survey will be available until Wednesday, October 13.

On Monday, August 30, reporter Dan Beekman published [an article](#) describing the site and survey and encouraging Seattle Times readers to participate.

*By the Numbers:* By end of day Sunday, August 29, the site had **747** total page views, **224** total visitors, and **81** survey responses representing **25** zip codes. The survey is available in **8** languages.

### Themes:

- Concerns about safety, homelessness, and illegal activity in parks
- Majority of respondents used parks and open spaces during the pandemic
- Access to outdoor programs and activation is very important
- Strong interest in increase tree canopy to create shaded areas to mitigate heat
- Interest in for recreation facility hours on weekday mornings, weekday evenings, and weekends



- Interest in environmental education and health and fitness programs
- Interest in staff focusing on customer service, emergency response, and cultural awareness

[Visit the Open House](#)

## In-Person Survey Work



*{Image Description: The logo and banner for SPR's annual Big Day of Play, held on August 21, 2021, and one of the community events at which the Community Engagement Ambassadors conducted survey work.}*

SPR staff out in the field through the Park Ambassador program are conducting intercept surveys with park users at 6 popular regional parks, including Alki, Gas Works, Golden Gardens, Green Lake, Magnuson, and Seward. Additionally, SPR's Community Engagement Ambassadors are conducting survey work, including offering in-language interpretation support, at community events, which during this period included the Adefua Cultural Education Workshop, BAZOOKAFEST, and the Big Day of Play.

### By the Numbers:

During the time period, Park Ambassadors conducted surveys at **6 popular parks**, Community Engagement Ambassadors attended **3 community events**, and by the end of day Sunday, August 29, a total of **209 surveys** were collected between the two groups representing **40** zip codes.

### Themes:

- Majority of respondents expressed significant concerns about addressing the impacts of homelessness, with some offering support for compassionate care for unhoused populations
- Desire for improved athletic field maintenance



- Frustrating about outdated signs for capital projects and wayfinding
- Primary uses during the pandemic were parks and open spaces, outdoor sports facilities, and socially distanced outdoor programs
- Primary barrier to accessing programs and services was lack of awareness about what is available
- Respondents most looking forward to ramp up of aquatic activities and additional community events and gatherings
- Strong interest in health and fitness and arts and culture programming
- Strong preference for digital communication to stay connected (newsletter, website, social media)

## Superintendent Listening Sessions

Seattle Parks and Recreation Superintendent Jesús Aguirre and a team of SPR staff also attended three listening sessions with community organizations to have focused conversations and hear input about SPR's role in supporting recovery and priorities for the future. To identify organizations to connect with, SPR staff prioritized organizations that serving historically marginalized populations and/or serving areas of highest disadvantage according to the City's [Race and Social Equity Index](#).

*By the Numbers:* 3 listening session discussions held in this timeframe with a total of 59 participants, including with the [Victory Heights Community Council](#) on August 17<sup>th</sup>, [Beacon Food Forest](#) on August 24<sup>th</sup>, and [El Centro de la Raza](#) on August 26<sup>th</sup>.

### Themes:

- Respond to homelessness & encampments to increase/restore access to natural areas.
- Facilitate community groups doing cleanups and holding community events to activate and build stewardship of neighborhood parks.
- Consider how to blend/best coordinate between SPR programs and similar offerings from community organizations to avoid duplication and best serve community.
- Hire local staff to run programs to increase relevance and bolster economy.
- Community gardens, urban farms, and P-Patches are a great way to support health outcomes and build community.
- SPR needs to build capacity to go into communities and ask neighbors of park development projects what they want to see.
- Offer programs in multiple languages to improve access to all communities.



## Program Engagement



*{Image Description: SPR Planning, Development, and Maintenance team member Carlos Muniz engaging with attendees at the Celebrate Little Saigon event on August 28<sup>th</sup>.}*

In addition to system-wide engagement activities, Seattle Parks and Recreation program staff are reaching out to communities they serve through their programs, services, and planning. During this time period, staff from the Planning, Development, and Maintenance Division and the Green Seattle Partnership (GSP) conducted outreach tailored to their work. The GSP team launched engagement work before this time period, so some events summarized here included events in late July and early August.

*By the Numbers:* **3** community events and **3** meetings reaching a total of **258** participants. Survey responses received in **5** languages. Events included: Celebrate Little Saigon event on August 28<sup>th</sup>, community workshop with ECOSS on July 29<sup>th</sup> at Seward Park, the Duwamish River Festival on August 7 at South Park Plaza, the West Duwamish Trails monthly meeting on August 10<sup>th</sup>, a survey with New GSP Forest Stewards conducted on August 6<sup>th</sup>, and a GSP-hosted workshop on centering anti-racist actions held on August 12<sup>th</sup>.

### Themes:

- Spending time outdoors with family is a high priority
- Interest in youth inclusion
- Add celebration to build community
- Social media is not best way to communicate
- Distrust of landholding institution
- Allow BIPOC people to regain influence
- Concerns about the safety and appearance of trails
- Need to support community organizations and foster skill sharing
- SPR seems “swamped, understaffed, underfunded”



- Critical to build climate change resilience
- Explore programs in places less natural and forested
- Support for additional dog off-leash areas
- Strongly divided opinions on unhoused populations within parks
- Value of for natural areas for plants and wildlife, access to water, trails and walkways and usable and flexible open space
- Strong preference for online surveys for expressing thoughts and opinions

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*Open until October 13!*



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In mid-August, Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) launched a community engagement effort to support implementation planning for our [2020-2032 Strategic Plan](#). This newsletter will report out on where we've been and high-level takeaways of what we're hearing through this work every two weeks, with this edition focused on engagement activities and feedback received between August 30 and September 12. We are also posting all the raw data we receive through our various engagement activities on our [Strategic Plan website](#) so our community can take a deeper dive into the detailed feedback we are receiving and processing.

August 30-September 12, 2021

### Online Open House



*{Image Description: One of the sections of the Online Open House in which visitors can expand different windows and learn more about the four key pieces of SPR's 2020-2032 Strategic Plan: Healthy People, Healthy Environment, Strong Communities, and Organizational Excellence. Pictures clockwise from top left: an Aqua Zumba class at Rainier Beach Pool, a picnic table overlooking Lake Washington, a stone sculpture at the Japanese Garden at the University of Washington Arboretum, and a young family voting on park amenities at Parks and Rec Fest in the summer of 2019.}*

Visitors to SPR's [online open house](#) continued to climb during this two-week period. This interactive site features key details about the 2020-2032 Strategic Plan, examples of SPR's work, a video of Superintendent Jesús Aguirre providing an overview of our approach to recovery, and a survey seeking community input on how SPR can serve our community's changing needs in the years to come. The survey will be available until Wednesday, October 13.

***By the Numbers:*** During this time period, the site had **12,226** total page views, **4,140** total visitors, and **2,262** survey responses representing **79** zip codes. The survey is available in **8** languages, with responses received in **4** languages to date (English, Korean, Spanish, and Tagalog). Respondents indicated **35** different languages spoken at home.

Respondents who answered the optional demographic questions indicated the following racial identities: **10%** Asian/Pacific Islander, **4%** American Indian or Alaska Native, **5%** Black or African American, **5%** Hispanic or Latino, **3%** Middle Eastern or North African, **2%** Native Hawaiian, and **72%** White.

#### **Themes:**

- Addressing homelessness impact in parks is extremely important (more than 86 percent of all respondents marked as very important)
- Strong interest in programming around health and fitness, arts and culture, environmental education, sustainability, and stewardship
- Outdoor programming is very important to respondents, as are security staff or park rangers, while childcare services are not as important to respondents
- Interest in weekend morning and afternoon recreation programming as well as weekday nights
- Respondents most often willing to travel up to 20 minutes to recreation services, with vehicular and pedestrian travel most popular

[Visit the Open House](#)

## **In-Person Survey Work**

SPR staff out in the field through the Park Ambassador program are conducting intercept surveys with park users at 6 popular regional parks, including Alki, Gas Works, Golden Gardens, Green Lake, Magnuson, and Seward.

***By the Numbers:*** During this time period, Park Ambassadors conducted surveys at **6 popular parks**, and by the end of day Sunday, September 12, a total of **184** surveys were collected between the two groups representing **40** zip codes.



Respondents who answered the optional demographic questions indicated the following racial identities: **9%** Asian/Pacific Islander, **1%** American Indian or Alaska Native, **5%** Black or African American, **8%** Hispanic or Latino, **1%** Middle Eastern or North African, and **68%** White.

**Themes:**

- Extension of Mount Baker/ Lake Washington drive closure during the rest of the year/indefinitely
- Address camping in parks while treating unhoused neighbors with dignity and respect
- Expressed love of parks and appreciation for SPR staff
- Development of the Lincoln Park Playground is critical to Lincoln Park users
- Increase park and comfort station maintenance
- Increase access to aquatics activities (ie. restart swimming lessons and extend pool hours)
- Consider composting in parks

## Listening Sessions



*{Image Description: SPR Superintendent Jesús Aguirre conducting a listening session with community members assembled by Lake City Collective at Little Brook Park. Image on the left shows Superintendent Aguirre responding to a question from participants, and the image on the right shows participants assembled on benches and at picnic tables at the park.}*

During this period, Seattle Parks and Recreation Superintendent Jesús Aguirre and a team of SPR staff also facilitated two listening sessions with community organizations to have focused conversations and hear input about SPR's role in supporting recovery and priorities for the future. Additionally, members of the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners facilitated listening sessions with two of their peer City Commissions.

**By the Numbers:** 4 listening session discussions held in this timeframe with a total of **56** participants. Superintendent listening sessions with community organizations included **Feet First** on September 1<sup>st</sup> and **Lake City Collective** on September 4<sup>th</sup>, and City Commission listening sessions included the **Urban**

**Forestry Commission** on September 1<sup>st</sup> and the **Immigrant and Refugee Commission** on September 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Themes:**

- Improve pathways for community-prioritized projects to receive funding
- SPR needs to go to where communities are, not expect them to come to the City, and sustain ongoing, human connections
- Additional clarity needed on how SPR projects are prioritized
- Redistribution of resources required to truly invest equitably, which will be hard
- System-level approach to homelessness response is essential
- Culturally relevant programming requires staff from within communities
- Improved language access (programming, wayfinding) is essential for equity and access
- Recruit and hire from within communities that SPR serves
- Add tree canopy to mitigate heat island effect

## **Program Engagement**

In addition to system-wide engagement activities, Seattle Parks and Recreation program staff are reaching out to communities they serve through their programs, services, and planning. During this time period, staff from the Planning, Development, and Maintenance Division and the Green Seattle Partnership conducted engagement activities.

**By the Numbers:** 1 community event (community walk in Georgetown) and 1 meeting (with Last 6000 Steering Committee) reaching a total of **19** participants.

**Themes:**

- Consideration that equity focus on south end of city; deep north too
- Concern about climate change impacts
- Interested in educational walks with City arborists
- Preference for online surveys as engagement strategy as well as community organized gatherings
- Desire for spaces for gathering and cultural events

Preference for landscaped areas with trees and plants, natural areas, and flexible

## **Emails**

Seattle Parks and Recreation also hosts a central email address for questions or concerns park and recreation users, [PKS\\_SPRStrategicPlan@Seattle.gov](mailto:PKS_SPRStrategicPlan@Seattle.gov).

**By the Numbers:** During this time period, SPR received **145** emails to this address.

**Themes:**

- Significant concerns expressed in 60+ emails about park safety, aesthetics, and impact on park users related to homelessness
- Equity implications of park naming
- Support for indoor fitness at pools, swim programming, all gender swims
- Interest in increasing or improving park maintenance across the system, particularly on Lake Washington Boulevard, Queen Anne Boulevard, Green Lake, 7 Hill Park, Alki, Rodgers Park, on trails, and in public restrooms
- Advocacy for multiple location-specific improvements/projects, including Be'er Sheva Park, West Point Lighthouse, Burke Gilman Trail, Green Lake Community Center, Lake City Community Center, Wedgwood Land-banked Site
- Desire for more off-leash areas & spray parks
- Support to build additional skate parks
- Inquiries about availability of indoor recreation services and suggestion for vaccine requirements to enable drop-in use
- Support for additional environmental education

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# Strategic Plan Implementation Update



## Strategic Plan Implementation Update

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### Online Open House



*{Image Description: A graphic from the welcome page of the Online Open House which provides a snapshot of some of the spaces and services Seattle Parks and Recreation uses to bring our community together, get people active, and connect them with nature. From top left to bottom left, going clockwise, 120 miles of trails, 131 public restrooms, 43 picnic shelters, 6,400 acres of parkland and open space, 15 designated viewpoints, 37 Olmsted Parks, 485 parks, and 23 facilities offering before and after school care.}*

Visitors to SPR's [online open house](#) was reduced from a peak during the second reporting period (August 30 – September 12), but continued to see steady traffic during this two-week period. This interactive site features background about SPR's programs and services, outlines the contents of the 2020-2032 Strategic Plan, showcases some examples of how SPR has

adapted its work to meet changing needs, and includes a survey seeking community input on how SPR can serve our community's changing needs in the years to come. The survey will be available until Wednesday, October 13.

**By the Numbers:** During this time period, the site had **2,778** total page views, **1,184** total visitors, and **413** survey responses representing **35** zip codes. The survey is available in **8** languages, and during this period, respondents indicated **8** different languages spoken at home.

Respondents who answered the optional demographic questions to date indicated the following racial identities: **13%** Asian/Pacific Islander, **4%** American Indian or Alaska Native, **7%** Black or African American, **7%** Hispanic or Latino, **4%** Middle Eastern or North African, **3%** Native Hawaiian, and **63%** White.

**Themes:**

- The overwhelming majority of respondents used open parks space and outdoor facilities during the pandemic.
- Most people who noted barriers to participation in SPR services selected “other” and their response related to camping and unhoused people in parks space
- People are excited about indoor pools, other water programs, and community spaces reopening as part of recovery
- People are most interested in health and fitness programming, arts and cultural events, and environmental education
- Directional signage, lighting/safety features, and security staff presence are all very important to people as is addressing the crisis of homelessness and its impacts to parks
- Weekends and weekday evenings are the most popular times for recreation programming
- So far, 98103 (North Central Seattle including Wallingford, Fremont, Green Lake, and Licton Springs), 98115 (Northeast Seattle including Roosevelt, Maple Leaf, Wedgwood, and Sand Point), and 98117 (Northwest Seattle including Ballard, Loyal Heights, Whittier Heights, Crown Hill, and Sunset Hill) are the most reported ZIP codes, but overall respondents have indicated a wide geographic spread and diverse age representation

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## **In-Person Survey Work**

SPR staff out in the field through the Park Ambassador program are conducting intercept surveys with park users at 6 popular regional parks, including Alki, Gas Works, Golden Gardens, Green Lake, Magnuson, and Seward. Additionally, Community Engagement Ambassadors are conducting survey work at community events throughout the City.

**By the Numbers:** During this time period, Park Ambassadors conducted surveys at **6 popular parks**, and by the end of day Sunday, September 26, a total of **112** surveys were collected.

Respondents who answered the optional demographic questions indicated the following racial identities: **8%** Asian/Pacific Islander, **1%** American Indian or Alaska Native, **7%** Black or African American, **5%** Hispanic or Latino, and **79%** White.

In the month of September, Community Engagement Ambassadors attended **8** community events collecting **40** survey responses. These events included: 2 Virtual Write to Breathe Presentations (September 4 and 11); Healthy Aging at Seward Park (September 11) and Rainier Playfield (September 25); YES Fest at Yester Terrace Park (September 17); Let's Connect! Virtual Ongoing Support and Relief (September 17); The Artist's Way at Jimi Hendrix (September 18); Muslimah's Against Abuse Outing at Seward Park (September 25).

**Themes:**

- Desire for more electric car charging stations
  - More in-park signage about upcoming events in the park
  - Need more accessible ways to access like better transit stops nearby and better bikes facilities in parks
  - More teen programs are needed
  - Continue the safe streets program and weekend closure of Lake Washington Boulevard
  - Primary barrier to participation identified is that respondents are not sure what is available
  - Respondents categorized addressing the impacts of homelessness, improved sightlines, lighting and physical improvements, and outdoor programming as very important
  - Respondents prioritize a healthy urban canopy and community centers for cooling and clean air as key climate change adaptation measures
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## **Listening Sessions**

During this period, two members of the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners facilitated a listening session with the Women's Commission.

**By the Numbers:** 1 listening session discussion held in this timeframe with a total of **13** participants from the [Seattle Women's Commission](#) on September 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Themes:**

- Increasing utilization/availability of picnic shelters would make parks more accessible for safe gatherings year-round
  - Adding more rentals of equipment (e.g., paddleboards) at low to no cost would make these activities more universally available
  - Build on South Park model of offering culturally specific food preparation classes
  - Increase partnerships to increase childcare and family programming opportunities in parks and facilities
  - Focus on representative recruitment and hiring
  - Build stronger relationships with BIPOC-led organizations and increase employee presence at parks
  - Expand scholarships, fee waivers, sliding scale
  - Improve connectivity to other services through enhanced wayfinding and resources available at SPR parks and facilities
  - More community gardens and P-Patches
  - Improve recycling and composting infrastructure in parks
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## Program Engagement

In addition to system-wide engagement activities, Seattle Parks and Recreation program staff are reaching out to communities they serve through their programs, services, and planning. During this time period, staff from the Grounds Maintenance and Green Seattle Partnership teams conducted engagement activities.

***By the Numbers:*** 1 survey sent out to current partners and volunteers related to Grounds Maintenance receiving **278 responses** and 1 meeting with Green Seattle Partnership Youth Ambassadors.

### Themes:

- Strong emphasis on addressing safety concerns and impacts of homelessness in parks
  - Slight indication for use of neighborhood parks over regional parks among survey respondents
  - Suggestions to improve access and inclusivity included cleaning bathrooms, adding more interpretive signage, enforcing leash laws, adding park security, improve education/awareness about neighborhood parks, facilitate permitting, and adding lighting, and creating more ADA accessible paths
  - The pandemic increased appreciation for outdoor spaces and deepened a desire to support ecological restoration to keep them healthy and available
  - Addressing racism will require deep, systemic change, and one opportunity to start is by fostering more racial equity and cultural appreciation among young people (i.e., elementary and middle school students)
  - Suggestion for SPR to provide more opportunities for residents to become involved in their local parks through volunteering, part-time or permanent jobs, day camps, and other activities
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## Emails

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***By the Numbers:*** During this time period, SPR received **43** emails to this address.

### Themes:

- Continued focus on addressing the impacts of homelessness
- Consider skill development programming for people experiencing homelessness
- Cover sport courts at Judkins Park so they can be used year round
- Improve maintenance at parks (specifically, Highland Park, Westcrest, Lincoln, Longfellow and Delridge)
- Keep Golf courses
- Add more information on parks descriptions (e.g., types of hiking trails)

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### Strategic Plan Background

SPR's Strategic Plan lays out priorities and direction for the department over a 13-year period. SPR paused implementation planning when we pivoted to emergency pandemic response in early 2020. Over the past 18 months, Seattle has experienced dramatic change – a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic, racial reckoning, economic downturn, and increasing impacts of climate change.

Many of SPR's core services bring people together to share space and build community. To support the community in response to the crises of 2020 and help shape our short-term budget priorities and operations, we are seeking to engage with communities we serve about how their needs have shifted since the pandemic. We need to better understand how community needs and priorities have changed, particularly for those disproportionately impacted by these crises.

**September 27- October 20, 2021**

### Online Open House

This final reporting period covers the closing of the survey on the [online open house](#). In preparation for final stretch of survey availability, SPR staff did some final promotional activity on social media, circulated the survey link to any individuals who had worked with SPR's event scheduling office to apply for a permit since the beginning of 2019, handed out small business cards with QR codes at community events, and process co-leads Selena Elmer and Shanyanika McElroy were interviewed on [Converge Media's September 28 morning show](#) to

speak about the process and encourage responses. While the survey closed on October 13 and is no longer active, the other information on the site will remain available for perusal.

***By the Numbers:*** During this time period, the site had **4,038** total page views, **1,680** total visitors, and **820** survey responses.

Respondents who answered the optional demographic questions to date indicated the following racial identities: **11%** Asian/Pacific Islander, **3%** American Indian or Alaska Native, **4%** Black or African American, **5%** Hispanic or Latino, **2%** Middle Eastern or North African, **2%** Native Hawaiian, and **73%** White.

In terms of age, **9%** of respondents were between 18-29, **23%** were between 30-39, **22%** were between 40-49, **17%** were between 50-59, **18%** between 60-70, **11%** were 70 or older, and **<1%** were under 17.

In total, **33** languages besides English were identified as the primary language spoken in a respondent's home.

#### ***Themes:***

- Of respondents that experienced barriers to participation in SPR's programs, the greatest barriers included: safety concerns associated with homelessness in parks, lack of knowledge about what's available, and lack of nearby relevant programs.
- Respondents continued to show strong interest in health and fitness, arts and culture, and environmental education programming.
- 86% of overall respondents and 88% of BIPOC-identified respondents indicated that security staff or park rangers were important or very important to creating a safe and welcoming park environment, but were less interested in other staff presence in parks.
- By far the most popular investment to mitigate extreme weather was healthy urban canopy to provide shade in outdoor spaces.
- The 3 top methods for reaching communities were digital communications (newsletter, social media, website, blog), online communities (Facebook, NextDoor, etc.). Among BIPOC-identified respondents, relationships (word of mouth, connections with key community leaders and elders) was also a priority.

[Visit the Open House](#)

## **In-Person Survey Work**

SPR staff out in the field through the Park Ambassador program are conducting intercept surveys with park users at 6 popular regional parks, including Alki, Gas Works, Golden Gardens, Green Lake, Magnuson, and Seward.

***By the Numbers:*** During this time period, Park Ambassadors conducted surveys at **6 popular parks**, and as of Wednesday, October 20, a total of **363** surveys were collected.

Respondents who answered the optional demographic questions indicated the following racial identities: **12%** Asian/Pacific Islander, **>1%** American Indian or Alaska Native, **12%** Black or African American, **7%** Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish, and **55%** White.

**Themes:**

- Interest in park improvements that support roller skating, skateboarding and outdoor hockey.
- Interest in increased lighting at parks
- Interest in an increase in the number of covered outdoor spaces
- Interest in more active/sports program for middle schoolers
- Interest in an increase in the number of electric charging stations at Seattle Park and Recreation locations
- Desire to continue the Safe Streets program

## Superintendent Listening Sessions

During this period, Superintendent Jesús Aguirre and SPR staff members conducted three listening sessions with community organizations, two meetings with groups of SPR partner institutions, and of the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners facilitated listening sessions with two other City Commissions.

**By the Numbers:** 3 listening sessions with community organizations reaching a total of 75 participants, including with [United Indians of All Tribes Foundation](#) (9/28), [Rainier Beach Action Coalition Beach Fives](#) (10/8), and outreach partners of the [City's Homelessness Outreach and Provider Ecosystem \(HOPE\) team](#) (10/20).

Additionally, the Board of Park Commissioners hosted 2 listening session discussions held in this timeframe with a total of 14 participants from the [Youth Commission](#) on September 28 and the [LGBTQ Commission](#) on October 12.

**Themes:**

- Community center services needed to fill education gaps in the Native community, including partnerships around social service provision
- Desire to improve visibility for indigenous history of Daybreak Star center, and tying history of public lands to indigenous history
- Desire for improved points of communication with SPR for operational and maintenance needs, especially for organizations near/in parks -- opportunity to improve communication with and among tenant organizations
- Support for expanding partnerships related to food security/food justice
- Invest in/partner with Black-led organizations serving south end of Seattle, including improved allyship to help navigate processes, and to build on those relationships to connect BIPOC youth to SPR programs and services
- Interest in additional paid youth employment opportunities
- Interest in priority hire as a community development tool
- Desire for additional drinking water facilities and 24-hour bathrooms
- Reckon with inequities embedded in encampment removal practices and connect with outreach providers to consider improvements and address disparities

## Program Engagement

In addition to system-wide engagement activities, Seattle Parks and Recreation program staff reached out to communities they serve through their programs, services, and planning. During this time period, staff from the Green Seattle Partnership, Capital and Facilities, Recreation teams conducted additional engagement activities with community, while members of the Administration and Support team launched an internal staff survey to support goal-setting around SPR's Organizational Excellence priorities. Some of this engagement work is still underway, and results are not fully available.

***By the Numbers:*** 1 Green Seattle Partnership Forest Steward workshop, 1 Capital & Facilities community event at the Bitter Lake Play Area (during a previous reporting period), and 1 SPR staff-wide survey soliciting **194** responses to date.

### ***Themes:***

- Reflect on language we use (i.e., plant nomenclature) and don't automatically revert to "that's what it's called"
- Integrate additional indigenous and Native names for plants
- Interest in spaces for cultural events and artwork as strategies to bring culture and heritage of the community into parks through design
- Interest in additional off-leash areas, additional services and humane treatment of individuals experiencing homelessness, and establishing park maintenance standards

## Partner Meetings

Superintendent Aguirre also convened two sessions with historical SPR partners to solicit feedback about SPR's work.

***By the Numbers:*** 2 partner meetings reaching a total of **29** participants representing **20** institutions, including the [Alliance for Pioneer Square](#), [Woodland Park Zoo](#), [Washington Trails Association](#), [Friends of the Conservatory](#), [Friends of Athletic Fields](#), [Steamer Virginia V Foundation](#), [Arboretum Foundation](#), [UW Botanic Gardens](#), [Golden Bricks Events](#), [Seattle Parks Foundation](#), [Seward Park Clay Studio](#), [Rain City Rock Camp](#), [Seward Park Audubon Center](#), [Southwest Youth and Family Services](#), [Neighborhood Farmers Markets](#), [YMCA Outdoor Leadership](#), [Madison Park Cooperative Preschool](#), [University District Partnership](#), [Cal Anderson Park Alliance](#), and [City Fruit](#).

### ***Themes:***

- Increase lifespan and usability of assets we have now (e.g., athletic fields, community centers), recognizing cost constraints of adding new
- Improve collaboration with SDOT and metro to enhance transportation options to/from parks
- Expand and enhance restroom facilities citywide, possibly in partnership with SPU
- Address public safety in park spaces, particularly at downtown parks
- Train staff in co-design practices to elevate community voice in park planning; work with BIPOC community to adapt ideas that may not fit City parameters at the start

- Improve communication and information-sharing -- with the public, among tenant organizations, etc.
- Reduce barriers: for volunteer engagement, for minority-owned businesses to be engaged with SPR, to obtain permits, for kids to play at fields
- Increase internships and pipeline to green jobs -- proactively plan for retirements
- Extend planning horizon for urban canopy to 70-100 years and think critically about resiliency and ongoing stresses posed by climate change
- Leverage environmental learning centers as a critical educational tool to enhance understanding of the impacts of climate change
- Improve recycling and compost services
- Consider aligning resources with level of park use to ensure high-use parks (e.g., Cal Anderson) stay well-maintained
- Increase pocket parks and maximize smaller green spaces to enhance respite, and consider blurring boundaries of parks to better integrate into nearby areas
- Leverage parks as spaces to bridge connections and build food access
- Assess how partners can reduce duplication of services, both with SPR and each other

## Emails

Seattle Parks and Recreation also hosts a central email address for questions or concerns park and recreation users, [PKS\\_SPRStrategicPlan@Seattle.gov](mailto:PKS_SPRStrategicPlan@Seattle.gov).

*By the Numbers:* During this time period, SPR received **141** emails to this address.

### *Themes:*

- Support for continuing the Keep It Moving Streets along Alki Point, Lake Washington Boulevard, and Green Lake and to collaborate with SDOT to design permanent improvements
- Continued concerns about impacts of homelessness in parks, particularly at Green Lake
- Location-specific concerns and inquiries, including blockages of the viewpoint at Mount Baker, status of Don Armeni boat lunch upgrades, various improvements in Queen Anne, improvements to garbage infrastructure at Bitter Lake, advocacy for full-service programming at Lake City community center, Northacres Park, Constellation Park,
- Add more ADA-accessible trails
- Enforce rules at off-leash areas

**Stay Engaged!**



***Send Questions & Comments***

[PKS\\_SPRStrategicPlan@seattle.gov](mailto:PKS_SPRStrategicPlan@seattle.gov)



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