

2016 Greenways Initiative Baseline Study



An Evaluation of SPR's Public Engagement and Community Capacity Building Strategies for Underserved Populations

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| Executive Summary..... | 4 |
| A Brief Overview: The Greenways Initiative..... | 5 |
| Greenways Initiative Capital Projects..... | 5 |
| • Summary And Description..... | 5 |
| • City Of Seattle Interdepartmental Coordination | 6 |
| • Completed Capital Projects | 6 |
| • Capital Projects In Process | 7 |
| • Minor Capital Improvements – Complete and Upcoming..... | 9 |
| Why Support the Initiative: Benefits Linked to Greenways..... | 9 |
| South Seattle: The People and Place..... | 10 |
| Seattle’s Primers for Stronger Inclusion Efforts: RSJI & IOPE..... | 12 |
| RSJI & SPR: A Brief Assessment of Department’s Performance..... | 12 |
| Greenways Initiative: Progress in 2016..... | 13 |
| Community Partner Spotlight: Feet First..... | 13 |
| Initiative Evaluation: Overview and Purpose of the Study..... | 14 |
| Impact Evaluation: A Data-Driven Methodology..... | 14 |
| • Research Methodology..... | 14 |
| • Evaluation Timeframe..... | 15 |
| • Measuring Initiative Performance..... | 15 |
| Populations of Interest..... | 15 |
| • Somali Mothers/ Somali Family Safety Task Force..... | 16 |
| • African American Teens/ Rainier Beach Community Center..... | 17 |
| • Vietnamese Seniors/ Asian Counseling and Referral Services..... | 17 |
| • Specialized Sports Athletes/ Seattle Adaptive Sports..... | 18 |
| 2016 Community Engagement and Outreach Strategies..... | 19 |
| • Creating Outreach Materials..... | 19 |
| • Identifying Community Champions..... | 19 |
| • Finding Appropriate Opportunities for Community Engagement..... | 20 |
| • Additional Greenways Outreach through SPR’s Planning and Development Division... | 20 |

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| Data Collection Tools..... | 23 |
| • Surveys..... | 23 |
| • Focus Groups..... | 23 |
| Evaluation Findings: Survey..... | 24 |
| • Noncompliance and Bad Data..... | 24 |
| • Data Breakdown..... | 24 |
| Lessons Learned: Surveys..... | 28 |
| Evaluation Findings: Focus Group:..... | 28 |
| • Somali Mothers Focus Group..... | 28 |
| • African American Teens Focus Group..... | 30 |
| • Vietnamese Seniors Focus Group..... | 32 |
| • Specialized Sports Athletes Focus Group..... | 34 |
| Lessons Learned: Focus Groups..... | 36 |
| • Somali Mothers Focus Group..... | 36 |
| • African American Teens Focus Group..... | 36 |
| • Vietnamese Seniors Focus Group..... | 37 |
| • Specialized Sports Athletes Focus Group..... | 37 |
| Greenways Initiative Performance Assessment..... | 38 |
| • Equitable Participation..... | 38 |
| • Community Partnerships..... | 38 |
| • Stakeholder Satisfaction..... | 38 |
| Recommendations for Improvement..... | 38 |
| Community Engagement Model: Spectrum of Participation..... | 40 |
| Conclusion and Acknowledgments from the Author | 41 |
| Appendix A: Capital Projects Plan Map..... | 42 |
| Appendix B: Status of Major Greenways Capital Projects..... | 44 |
| Appendix C: Seattle Greenways and Boulevards Interdepartmental Project Process..... | 43 |
| Appendix D: Community Engagement Logic Model..... | 45 |
| Appendix E: Greenways Initiative Survey..... | 46 |
| Appendix F: Focus Group Questions and Format..... | 47 |
| Appendix G: Ground Rules for Focus Groups..... | 48 |
| Appendix H: Participation Consent Form for Focus Groups..... | 49 |
| Appendix I: Child Consent Form for Focus Groups..... | 50 |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the Greenways Initiative, Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) has scheduled seven capital improvement projects at City parks, some completed in 2016 and ongoing in 2017 and beyond to improve experiences for people who walk and bike for health, transportation, and pleasure. In adherence to the RSJI and IOPE strategies for community buy-in from a broader set of impacted stakeholders, SPR recently expanded their public engagement efforts to underserved communities in South Seattle, an area that has historically suffered from inequitable access to City services, to reach and talk to those not usually included.

This study focused on the performance of the Greenways Initiative in the context of the department's success in engaging people of color, local immigrant communities, and other populations underrepresented in the City's policy and decision-making processes. Using **equitable participation, community partnerships, and stakeholder satisfaction** as performance indicators, the research team was asked to perform targeted outreach at community festivals and City-sponsored events in the summer of 2016 to collect data and find community gatekeepers to better increase more diverse participation. Responses from 77 survey takers were analyzed.

Based on demographic data and a series of participant observations, the evaluation team identified four population groups to engage in 90-minute focus group conversations about safety, accessibility, and inclusion:

- **Somali Mothers**
- **African American Teens**
- **Vietnamese Seniors**
- **Specialized Sports Athletes**

While survey data represented the interests of the survey-taking majority (English-speaking, White, middle-aged women), a supplementary bivariate analysis was conducted along race and zip code categories to identify disparities in parks use and preferences for local activation events. In terms of elements that would improve their walking and biking experiences, respondents who identified as Black ranked 'Smooth Pavements' as most important criteria, while Asian respondents valued 'Safety Features.' Respondents who identify as White were more likely to be aware of the Greenways Initiative, more prone to travel by bicycles, and five times more likely than any other racial groups to use local parks and greenways often (multiple times a week.)

The four focus group sessions provided a detailed account of unique community needs and areas for improvement as capital improvement projects increase in South Seattle in the coming years. They include:

- **Somali Mothers:** Participants were mainly concerned about the lack of culturally-relevant programs and minimal representation in leadership roles at SPR that limit their engagement with the department.
- **African American Teens:** Participants voiced gratitude for inclusion in planning processes, but expressed skepticism that greenways would improve safety conditions in their neighborhood.
- **Vietnamese Seniors:** Participants stated they accessed services from local nonprofit agencies in lieu of local government agencies, but were eager to participate in future engagement opportunities with the City.
- **Specialized Sports Athletes:** Participants agreed that ADA non-compliance at parks affected usability and restricted opportunities for wheelchair-bound users. They advocated for active collaboration with area nonprofits to address access barriers, share available resources, and implement sound policies.

Overall, the Greenways Initiative was successful in engaging underrepresented populations in the baseline year and laying the foundation for future partnerships. However, SPR should adopt a community-based participatory research model in the coming years to leverage the public's expertise on issues and to vet proposed ideas and projects at earlier stages of greenways planning and implementation. Doing so will allow SPR to understand how underserved communities view health, safety and social equity and develop local leadership that collaborates with the department and City to create benefit-maximizing decisions and outcomes.

While the Executive Summary focuses on macro-level findings about community needs to be addressed in the future, readers of this report can find detailed information about project scope, methodology, outreach strategies, results, and recommendations for improvement in subsequent sections of the report.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW: THE GREENWAYS INITIATIVE

The Greenways Initiative is an ongoing City effort to improve non-motorized travel options for pedestrians and bicyclists in Seattle. Funded by the Seattle Park District, the Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) will provide programs to connect and activate links from neighborhood greenways to local parks in 2016 and 2017 and increase community knowledge about the 60 miles of connected greenways coming to neighborhoods by 2025. Working in collaboration with the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), SPR will organize public events and activities to engage City departments, local businesses, neighborhood groups, and other community stakeholders and identify existing greenways that would benefit from safe linkages to City parks.

While SPR focused on gathering input, building consensus, and finding future parks capital improvement projects in 2016, the department recognized a timely opportunity to engage more constituents from historically underrepresented groups in South Seattle. With three major Parks renovations planned for 2016 and 2017 in South Seattle, SPR is committed to inclusive public engagement, reaching people of diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural groups and across the socioeconomic spectrum to feel empowered to share suggestions, concerns, and other relevant feedback pertaining to the influx of greenways to their neighborhoods. By validating broader community participation earlier and often in the department's planning and implementation stages, the Greenways Initiative strives to foster community engagement practices that are inclusive of the diverse communities in Seattle.

GREENWAYS INITIATIVE CAPITAL PROJECTS¹

Summary and Description

The overall goal of the Greenways Initiative is to enhance and activate connection points from neighborhood greenways to parks. The capital improvements that result from the Greenways Initiative strive to improve access and entrances. They make parks adjacent to neighborhood greenways and other major bicycle and pedestrian routes welcoming destinations for walking and bicycling for people of all ages and abilities.

A critical step in the success of the Greenways Initiative has been to expand the partnership and coordination between SPR and SDOT. In 2016, SPR was able to leverage \$200,000 in funds for Greenways Initiative capital project planning and implementation by **partnering with SDOT's Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) Program to gain an additional \$106,000** to expand the scope of work at Rainier Beach Playfield. In 2015, the SDOT SRTS program also contributed funds that enabled the completion of a project at Jefferson Park.

Coordination of projects with SDOT's Greenway Implementation Plan enhances the network of neighborhood greenways across the city with improved access to parks. This symbiotic

¹ Section Contributor: Mike Schwindeller, SPR Capital Projects Coordinator

relationship between SPR and SDOT, working together on both infrastructure and activation events, brings more users to parks for healthy and active recreation. For a detailed account of the status of major capital improvement projects, refer to Appendix C.

City of Seattle Interdepartmental Coordination

Beyond the critical collaboration with SDOT Neighborhood Greenways and SDOT Safe Routes to Schools, the Greenways Initiative has also engaged with the Department of Neighborhoods (DON) to help address projects that cross multiple jurisdictions, like greenways on historic or landmark boulevards. In March 2016, planners from SPR met with DON to go over the landmarks review process, as it relates to greenways and boulevards. In April, SPR staff coordinated an interdepartmental meeting (SPR, SDOT, DON) to review process flow chart (see Appendix B) for approving projects under multiple jurisdictions and the desired outcomes from a June ‘Greenways and Boulevards’ workshop.

Completed Capital Projects

- **Jefferson Park (16th Ave Drainage Improvements) - Completed Fall 2015**

This project was sponsored by SDOT’s SRTS and the SPR’s Greenways Initiative. It improved the sidewalk, drainage, and parking along 16th Ave. S between S Dakota St. and S Nevada St, just west of the Jefferson Playfield. The new improvements increased safety and walkability for Asa Mercer International Middle School students, as well as the community. The walkway is one of the main routes to school for many students and prior to this project was often unusable due to puddling and mud from the adjacent hill. This improved sidewalk joins with the Beacon Hill Neighborhood Greenway, improving the connection for residents to the school and Jefferson Park.



Before



- **John C. Little Sr. Park Path and Stair Upgrades – Completed Fall 2016**

This site connected the Rainier Valley East/West Greenway along Willow St with the Chief Sealth Multi-Use trail. It is a destination along the community’s “Ribbon of Parks”

plan, with the intent of connecting Othello Park, the Othello LINK Light Rail station, John C. Little Sr. Park, New Holly Library and Community Services Center, and Van Asselt Playground and Community Center. The Greenways Initiative project created a new soft surface path and stairway in line with the vision of the community’s “Ribbon of Parks” plan, improving pedestrian access to and through the park. The project also replaced 200 feet of asphalt path that had been destroyed by tree roots with a new path testing several different methods of root barriers to protect the pavement.



Before



After

Capital Projects in Process

- **Rainier Beach Playfield Upgrades and New Connection** – Construction Winter 2017
This project site located at Rainier Beach Playfield, connects the community assets of the Rainier Beach Playground, Dunlap Elementary School, South Shore K-8, Rainier Beach Community Center and Pool, and South Lake High School. The site is also in close proximity

to transit corridors on Rainier Ave S and MLK Jr. Way S, including LINK Light Rail and Metro service. The north/south path will be incorporated into the SDOT Rainier Valley Neighborhood Greenway scheduled for construction in 2017. This was also a priority location for safety improvements by SDOT's SRTS, which partnered on the project and contributed \$106,000 to the project that allowed for an expanded scope of work. In addition to widening the path and providing a new east/west connection, the project addresses significant root heave and drainage issues along the entire path.



Before



Rainier Beach Playfield path, before construction

- **Interlaken Boulevard Staircase Upgrades** – Construction scheduled for 2017
Design coordination with SDOT to upgrade a trail along the new Central Area Neighborhood Greenway built by SDOT in 2015. This trail and staircase connect E Interlaken Boulevard to Boyer Ave E.



Before





Before

- **Gas Works Park Pedestrian and Bicycle East Entry Upgrade** – Construction 2017
This project is in conjunction with the larger SPR CIP project for Gas Works Park East Entry and ADA upgrades, expanding the scope to improve the connection to the Burke Gilman Trail near the intersection of N Northlake Way and Meridian Ave N. This is a priority connection for both SPR and SDOT and is identified for improvement in the Seattle Bicycle Master Plan.

Minor Capital Improvements – Complete and Upcoming

The SPR Greenways Initiative is also implementing minor improvements and installation of amenities. This was in response to feedback from advisory groups and public comment and allows the Greenways Initiative to have a wider impact across the city. It also improves SPR’s ability to respond to requests for additional small scale amenities.

Completed Capital Improvements

Green Lake Community Center Bicycle Rack
Woodland Park, New Bicycle Parking
Jefferson Park Community Center Bicycle Rack
Denny Blaine Park, New Bicycle Parking
Seacrest Park, Bicycle Rack Upgrades
Seattle Aquarium, New Bicycle Parking

Minor Improvements – Planned for 2017

Woodland Park Playground Bicycle Parking
Madrona Park Bicycle Parking
West Seattle Stadium Bicycle Parking

WHY SUPPORT THE INITIATIVE: BENEFITS LINKED TO GREENWAYS

As Seattle expands its network of greenways, adjacent communities will benefit from the greenways related capital project planning, design and construction projects that offer multiple advantages to living and working near greenways. They include:

- Creating beautiful neighborhood destinations that are welcoming and accessible for all pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Directing people to and around neighborhood hot spots (local parks, schools, businesses, etc.) via clearly-marked pavements and wayfinding signs.
- Increasing safety by introducing low speed limits and clearly marked pavements.
- Diverting cars away from residential streets by introducing road bumps, stop signs, and other traffic inhibitors that limit traffic and speeding in residential streets.
- Relieving congestion on busy streets by providing safer, non-motorized alternatives for transportation around the neighborhood.
- Encouraging green communities by promoting bike and foot travel, which in turn, reduces environmental damage and pollution.
- Incentivizing healthy lifestyles by offering the safe and open spaces to exercise and pursue other outdoor recreational activities that are linked to positive health outcomes.
- Improving neighborhood's livability conditions by increasing access to communal spaces, where community can congregate, host family-friendly events and meet others.
- Creating stronger communities where people enjoy more time outdoors, connect with others, and build vibrant, healthy, and tight-knit communities around greenways and parks.



SOUTH SEATTLE: THE PEOPLE AND PLACE

While the true geographical boundary of South Seattle is nebulous, the area traditionally refers to communities south of the Central District and east of Interstate 5: Rainier Valley, Rainier Beach, Seward Park, Mount Baker, Beacon Hill and Colombia City. South Seattle has a disproportional share of Seattle's racial and ethnic communities. In 2010, its population comprised of 32% Asian, 28% White or Caucasian, 25% Black or African-American, 8% Hispanic and 5% biracial or of mixed race.² Historical practices like redlining and current trends like gentrification and the affordable housing crisis continue to play a significant role in confining people and color and immigrant populations to this area (see map on Page 12). However, these dynamic communities continue to thrive South Seattle and the area's rich cultural heritage is clearly evident in its wide array of local businesses, restaurants, cultural associations, and booming arts scene. Widely touted as the most diverse zip code in the country (98118), Southeast Seattle in particular, houses large ethnic communities that speak Chinese, Somali, Vietnamese, or Spanish as their primary language. According to the Seattle School District figures, students in South Seattle speak over 50 languages at home.

² Tate, Cassandra. *Southeast Seattle ZIP Code 98118: Neighborhood of Nations*. History Link. 13 August 2012, <http://www.historylink.org/File/10164>

SEATTLE'S PRIMERS FOR STRONGER INCLUSION EFFORTS: RSJI & IOPE

In 2014, Mayor Murray renewed the City's commitment to the Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) and mandated all departments work on three initiatives, policies or programs that improve access to opportunities, measure equity outcomes, and strengthen partnerships across institutions and with underserved communities in 2015 and beyond. The RSJI provides interested parties the resources, tools, and support to end race-based inequities in Seattle. The Racial Equity Toolkit (RET), a set of guiding questions to assess how local policies, services, and budget decisions benefit and burden communities, plays a critical role in diagnosing a department's overall effectiveness in eliminating barriers to equity.

The Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement Guide (IOPE) is another helpful resource that specifically addresses best practices for public engagement. With a focus on building community capacity, this document outlines how City staff can build strong and sustainable partnerships with communities that have been previously disengaged from city processes and consequently affected by the negative effects of institutionalized racism and the inequitable allocation of resources. This framework highlights the importance of racially- and culturally-appropriate practices and interventions to build greater awareness and engagement, while leveraging the diverse cultural assets, perspectives, and knowledge from different communities. Adopting the IOPE's detailed strategies for robust public engagement and the analytical lens of the RET can help City departments better represent the needs of the communities they serve and provide necessary services and programs in a fair and deliberate manner.

RSJI & SPR: A BRIEF ASSESSMENT OF DEPARTMENT'S PERFORMANCE

SPR is interested in concurrently advancing its strategic vision of healthy people, healthy environment, and strong communities and vetting all proposed policies, projects, and budgetary decisions through a racial equity lens. These complementary departmental values ensure better access to Parks programs and services, the creation of welcoming spaces for all people, and inclusive opportunities for underrepresented communities to take on more proactive roles in land stewardship. The department's RSJI Change Team is responsible for applying the RSJI lens to departmental work and ensuring service delivery and fund allocation are equitably distributed to support the long-term health and vibrancy of all communities.

SPR's social justice efforts focus on raising awareness of racial inequities, collaborating with constituents in underserved communities and other City departments to improve life outcomes, and engaging with a broader set of stakeholders to learn how proposed policies, programs, and decisions affect them. Adhering to the six-step RET framework, several Parks initiatives like the Get Moving Initiative have been unlocking potential in previously-underserved communities and improving relationships between service providers and the people they serve, creating public spaces that are welcoming, inclusive and empowering for all. Recently, SPR announced its plans to eliminate fees for many drop-in activities at community centers after a lengthy public engagement process. In effect on January 2017, this change promises to remove barriers for low income residents in accessing basic services, especially in South Seattle.

GREENWAYS INITIATIVE: PROGRESS IN 2016

In 2016, SPR and SPOT spearheaded seven capital improvement maintenance projects that repaired existing amenities and activated local parks and greenways in certain neighborhoods. Two of the proposed projects occurred in South Seattle locations (Rainier Beach Playfield and John C Little Sr. Park) and included changes like repaving paths, installing bike racks/ramps, and adding wayfinding signs.

By focusing on equitably developing and improving greenways in South Seattle, SPR's projects increased public interest and access to parks, improved safety conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians, and provided local communities culturally-appropriate events and services that help build community. In adherence to the IOPE's basic tenets of public engagement, the Greenways Initiative engaged stakeholders from diverse cultural backgrounds to understand distinct needs and perspectives of the people who live in the area, and created sustainable community partnerships with homeowners, business partners, and other service providers.

COMMUNITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: FEET FIRST

Feet First is a statewide grassroots group that engages communities, developers, and government agencies in discussions about the walkable communities. Their year-round work includes recruiting walking ambassadors, conducting community walkthroughs, creating public resources for pedestrians, and advocating for policies that benefit people who walk for health, transportation, environment, community, and pleasure.

Under its contract with SPR, Feet First performs targeted education and outreach on the Greenways Initiative and organizes walking audits of neighborhood parks and adjacent greenways. In order to achieve full community buy-in, Feet First uses the RSJI framework and measures the effectiveness and success of their public engagement strategies by its ability to:

- Build a sustainable culture of walking
- Preserve and grow community partnerships
- Educate stakeholders currently missing from conversations about parks activation
- Enrich stakeholder discussions with perspectives from underrepresented populations
- Leverage existing resources and funding to support ongoing public engagement efforts



Figure 2: Feet Walking Audit
Source: Feet First Blog

In the 2016 calendar year, Feet First documented monthly progress and conducted walking tours at Rainier Beach Playfield and John C Little Sr. Park with its community partners in South Seattle. Their primary deliverables included comprehensive reports that compiled community feedback and offered expert recommendations that will be important for the department's greenways planning and implementation decisions.

INITIATIVE EVALUATION: OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this evaluation was to assess SPR's performance in educating the public about the Greenways Initiative, activating culturally-relevant connection points from neighborhood greenways to parks, and bringing currently underserved communities to the table during discussions about greenways planning and implementation. On August 2016, SPR hired two temporary research and evaluation staff to apply the RET and IOPE lens to current outreach efforts. The Greenways team created a work plan with the core objectives that include:

- Promoting benefits of connected greenways for bicyclists and pedestrians of all ages and abilities in South Seattle
- Increasing community input from underserved neighborhoods in South Seattle
- Cataloging community needs and accessibility issues in Parks usage, with a special focus on underserved communities
- Documenting community partnerships with underrepresented groups and stakeholders
- Determining whether current departmental efforts are effective in promoting racial equity in Parks' activation projects
- Increasing inventory of tools and strategies to support racial equity-building work



Figure 3: Family at John C Little Sr. Park
Source: SPR 12/12Walking Audit

The evaluation team conducted participant observations, surveys, and focus groups with select population groups and at target locations to understand impacts of activation events on local communities and to track outcomes to measure long-term racial equity in City programs. The subsequent sections in this report includes outreach methodology, data analysis, observed findings, lessons learned, and recommendations for future improvement.

IMPACT EVALUATION: A DATA-DRIVEN METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology

To evaluate the effectiveness of the Greenways Initiative in engaging underrepresented populations in discussions about planned and future greenways, the research team used an impact-based evaluation model. Impact evaluation models are useful in measuring intervention effects in target populations by gauging progress towards desired outcomes and impacts. This model can be replicated every year to measure changes in effects over time.

Complementary to the RET guidelines, the impact-based evaluation model pays specific attention to capturing unintended (both positive and negative) consequences of an intervention. Data collection methods under this evaluation model will amplify community concerns about

neighborhood conditions, community parks use, and the potential benefits or harm of greenways activation on local communities, specifically for people of color, local immigrant communities, and other populations underrepresented in the City's policy and decision-making processes.

SPR hired two evaluation staff with experience in equity-building norms from a local public policy school to ensure that the project would closely align with the foundational principles of RET and IOPE. In addition to their background, evaluation staff were also required to complete 8 hours of race and social justice trainings administered by the City's Office of Civil Rights to gather additional context to ground their work. Equipped with the right equity lens, the evaluation staff were then responsible for creating data tools, developing community relationships with key population groups, and conducting data analysis for the evaluation.

Evaluation Timeframe

The evaluation team spent six months determining the baseline threshold to glean the short-term outcomes of the department's ongoing capital improvement projects at local parks and community engagement efforts that are compliant with RET and IOPE standards. While this report only highlights data collected in the first year of the initiative evaluation, annual evaluations will be necessary in the future to better assess changes in public support for an expanded greenways network, to catalog the evolving needs of underserved communities over time, and to understand long-term impacts of inclusive community engagement strategies.

Measuring Initiative Performance

In order to properly gauge the effectiveness of the Greenways Initiative, the evaluation focused on the department's success in vetting capital improvement projects and building public support from a broader set of community stakeholders. The initiative's current theory of change presupposes the preconditions necessary to deliver its various impacts (see Appendix D).

The relative strengths and weaknesses of the implementation of capital projects (existing and upcoming) will be measured based on how well the initiative scores on the following performance indicators:

- **Equitable Participation:** Does the department encourage participation from underserved communities in Parks-related events and projects that affect them?
- **Community Partnerships:** Does the department do enough to nurture existing partnerships and cultivate new ones that represent the needs of underserved communities?
- **Stakeholder Satisfaction:** Does the department thoughtfully engage underserved communities to ensure all affected parties are satisfied with final decisions and policies?

POPULATIONS OF INTEREST

While the Greenways Initiative is interested in improving feedback mechanisms for underrepresented communities in South Seattle as a whole, the evaluation team was particularly interested in connecting with certain population groups about Parks usage and barriers to bicycle and foot travel around their neighborhoods. The following populations were identified based on

their community's deep historical ties to South Seattle and their unique perspectives that are currently missing from conversations about neighborhood safety, health, transportation, and accessibility to local services. Also listed are the local partners who recruited prime candidates within their communities and offered valuable input that will enrich future planning decisions.

Somali Mothers/ Somali Family Safety Task Force

In the last 25 years, Seattle has seen an uptick in its Somali population. Often arriving in the United States as refugees, the Somali community has successfully established a presence in the Rainier Valley and the area extending south into Tukwila and SeaTac. Somali students are the second largest bilingual group, according to Seattle Public Schools estimates. Most Somali immigrants practice Islam and consider their faith and culture as integral parts of their identity. To that effect, Somali immigrants often participate in large community celebrations around Muslim holidays and cultural festivals. In Seattle, they have established mosques and various places of business and have retained cultural practices like consuming halal food. An interesting trend is the prominence of Somali women in female-run households that stem from losing husbands in war or being separated at refugee camps from fathers. Furthermore, traditional Somali family structures prescribe to a matriarchy system with mothers in charge of the family's key decision-making processes.³

While there are many local organizations that provide language assistance, housing, counseling and financial support, the **Somali Family Task Force** is an entirely community-run group that empowers and advocates for culturally-appropriate needs of the Somali population in education, access to health services, training, and economic and community development across Washington State. Based in the New Holly neighborhood, the group provides literacy and leadership training, contributes to economic stability through skills development, and collaborates with local schools and health groups to promote better access to care and education. The evaluation team reached out to Farhiya Mohammed, an active member of the group, to recruit Somali mothers active within the organization to participate in a focus group and lend their expertise on issues like safety and access to SPR services.



Figure 4: Task Force Clients

Source: Somali Family Safety Task Force Facebook page

³ Ott, Jennifer. *Somali Community in Seattle*. History Link. 19 November 2010, <http://www.historylink.org/File/9634>

African American Teens/ Rainier Beach Community Center

According to the 2010 Census estimates, the Black or African American population in Seattle makes up 7.9% of Seattle's total population. However, African American communities are often concentrated in South Seattle, starting in the Central District neighborhood and continuing onto South King County. Historically, this geographic separation from North and downtown Seattle (and many City services) has resulted in large disparities in criteria like education, income, unemployment rates, homeownership, housing costs burdens, vehicle availability, etc. when compared to the White, non-Hispanic population.⁴ To effect changes in economic stability, social capital, and access to services, the City of Seattle has been focusing on building sustainable relationships with community groups and public assistance programs with the unique needs of the African American community in mind.



Figure 5: Scenes from a Dance Class

Source: SPR Rainier Beach Community Center Webpage

The Rainier Beach Community Center is located in one of the most diverse zip codes in the country and offers a full range of recreational programs for participants of all ages. The community center underwent extensive remodeling in 2013 and now features a wading pool, public plaza area, and improved playground equipment. In addition, the community center offers several free or low-cost amenities include: before- and after-school care; sports and teen programs; computer labs; drop-in services and community meeting rooms. This

community hub is a vital resource for the local community, but its teen programs are what make this community center special. High school aged kids use this community center year-round for a myriad of reasons ranging from athletic programs to after-school help. While open to all, the community center and its teen program serve a higher percentage of African American youth and young adults. The evaluation team contacted Darren Anderson, the Teen Programs Coordinator, to recruit local youth who use the community center's after-school services to participate in a focus group about bicycle and foot travel around their neighborhood.

Vietnamese Seniors/ Asian Counseling and Referral Services

In late 1970s, Seattle experienced a dramatic increase in its Vietnamese population as refugees escaping the harsh realities of the Vietnam War arrived in droves and started calling Seattle home. Later waves of immigration in the 1980s and 1990s contributed to the further expansion of Vietnamese communities in Seattle, with strong concentrations centered in the Little Saigon district of the International District. These days, the Vietnamese community has expanded to

⁴ <http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/cityplanning/populationdemographics/aboutseattle/raceethnicity/default.htm>

several neighborhoods in South Seattle and contributes to local economies through family-run restaurants, stores and farmers' markets that sell fresh vegetables, fruits and seafood, and community services that primarily serve Asian customers. The Vietnamese population consider themselves bilingual in English and Vietnamese, but many Vietnamese immigrants speak other Asian languages like Mandarin (Chinese), Khmer (Cambodian), Japanese, and to a smaller extent, French as a result of cultural contact in Seattle and their native homeland. However, despite fluency in other languages, most Vietnamese immigrants speak Vietnamese because it offers an opportunity to preserve their cultural identity and connect with others. Cultural festivals that feature traditional dance, music, stories, and games are another way this community prefers to socialize and retain their cultural DNA in the United States.



Figure 6: Activities at Club Bamboo

Source: Asian Counseling and Referral Services Website

The Asian Counseling and Referral Services (ACRS), located in the Columbia City neighborhood, is a multiservice agency that caters to immigrant, refugees, and American-born Asian and Pacific Islanders. Serving clients who speak over 40 languages, ACRS provides innovative multicultural services that include: emergency meal programs, health and behavioral services, citizenship and immigration assistance, employment and technical skills building workshops, and youth and child

development programs. One of ACRS's beloved programs, Club Bamboo, provides multicultural activities and nutritious meals that nurture social and physical well-being of the aging Asian and Asian-American clients in Seattle. The evaluation team reached out to Club Bamboo coordinators, Tracee Lee and Monica Le, to recruit senior citizens who use ACRS services to participate in a focus group and gauge their interests and concerns when walking and biking for health, socialization, and mental wellbeing.

Specialized Sports Athletes/ Seattle Adaptive Sports

Achieving social justice for underserved populations encompasses more than achieving racial equity for people of color. While a typical able-bodied park user may dislike cracked, uneven trails at their local park, for a wheelchair user, the same conditions may compromise their mobility and result in a serious fall or an injury. Limited access is a recurring complaint for people with physical disabilities who routinely access Seattle's parks and community centers. The Specialized Programs at SPR offer activities and events for people living with physical and developmental disabilities; however, patrons have expressed difficulty in entering and navigating around common areas where the program operates. ADA non-compliance is often cited as a reason to explain why wheelchair-bound people sometimes underutilize available resources. In addition to not addressing safety concerns, paths and trails that fail to account for the needs of wheelchair users limit their opportunities for healthy recreation, resulting in health and social inequities among populations with mobility issues.

Serving athletes in wheelchairs ages 3 and older, **Seattle Adaptive Sports (SAS)** works to provide the fitness, sports, and social opportunities for youth and adults with physical disabilities to participate and compete in athletic and recreational activities all over the Puget Sound area. The organization organizes year-round tournaments and events at several community centers in Seattle and advocates for the health and recreation needs of wheelchair-bound athletes. Furthermore, the group is one of few programs that offer extensive and continuous sports programs (ice hockey, basketball, tennis, etc.) and raise funds to send athletes to national competitions. The evaluation team contacted Tami English, the Executive Director of SAS to recruit wheelchair athletes who use the Miller Community Center to participate in a focus group and discuss common challenges in navigating to and around local parks and community centers and how SPR can support their commitment to staying active, healthy and strong.



Figure 7: Wheelchair Sports Games
Source: Seattle Adaptive Sports

2016 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH STRATEGIES

Creating Outreach Materials

At the start of the evaluation period, the research staff produced a detailed flyer for the Greenways Initiative to improve public awareness of neighborhood greenways and to inform interested parties about upcoming activation events in South Seattle. Staff also developed a one-page survey that were distributed at summer festivals and upcoming meetings to capture how local communities use their parks and identify areas for future improvement. Flyers and surveys were translated into the three languages spoken by the most non-native speakers of English in South Seattle: Somali, Vietnamese, and Spanish.

Identifying Community Champions

In order to reach underserved communities that are currently disengaged from conversations about Seattle’s network of greenways, the evaluation team turned to community partners to understand how people living in South Seattle use green spaces and to build sustainable partnerships with locally-led community organizing and advocacy groups that support vulnerable populations that have not historically benefitted from neighborhood greenways. From August through November, Greenways staff met with leaders from the following groups to better learn about their needs in promoting walking and biking for health, transportation, recreation, and community building: *Seattle Neighborhood Greenways, Freeway Parks Association, Feet First,*

Somali Family Safety Taskforce, Asian Counseling and Referral Services, African American Advisory Council, and Seattle Adaptive Sports.

Finding Appropriate Opportunities for Community Engagement

In addition to individually meeting key stakeholders, the members of the evaluation team were present during the following local festivals and City-sponsored events as part of their work to connect with target constituents in South Seattle:

- Rainier Summer Parkway (8/13)
- Back 2 School Bash (8/20)
- Safe Routes to School Kickoff (8/26)
- Bicycle Sunday (8/28)
- West Seattle Parkways (9/25)
- Heart and Soul Festival (10/1)
- John C Little Park Walking Audit (12/10)
- Othello Park Music & Arts Festival (8/14)
- Feet First Find It Fix It Walk (8/24)
- Ballard Summer Parkway (8/27)
- Mount Baker Hub Festival (9/18)
- Walktober (10/1)
- East African Youth Night (10/28)



Figure 8: Community Outreach at Ballard
Source: SPR 08/27 Ballard Parkways Event

The Greenways staff set up booths and shared information and resources that included the Greenways Initiative flyers and surveys in four languages, the Seattle map of all city-owned parks, applications for departmental grants, promotional materials for upcoming events like Bike Sundays and Camp Long, Feet First’s maps of walking and biking trails, and much more. As an incentive to hear from families with small children, staff also gave

away sidewalk chalk, bubbles, emergency whistles, glow sticks, and magnets. Festival goers who filled out the Greenways Initiative survey also received a pedometer for sharing their insights and time. At a few events, SPR provided complementary face painting, children’s performers, bike rentals, and other age-appropriate activities to drive traffic to the booths and allow the team to share details about the Greenways Initiative and solicit public comments and concerns.

Additional Greenways Outreach through SPR’s Planning and Development Division⁵

- **Seattle Neighborhood Greenways (SNG) – 11/3/2015**
Stakeholder meeting to discuss the Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) Greenways Initiative, its priorities and goals and how SPR and SNG could collaborate on projects and a workshop focused on Greenways, Parks and Boulevards.

⁵ Section Contributor: Mike Schwindeller, SPR Capital Projects Coordinator

- **Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board – 11/4/2015**
 Presentation of the SPR Greenways Initiative Implementation Plan, including the proposed Capital Improvement Projects, the Activation and Programming component, and a deeper look at several proposed projects. Feedback included adding some smaller capital projects of new bicycle racks and possibly wayfinding signs; consider prioritizing improvements that support or connect to community centers; consider new curb cuts that are amenities for all users; consider bicycle parking inventory in parks.
- **Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board – 12/9/2015**
 Presentation of the SPR Greenways Initiative. Feedback from the advisory board included; consider people with disabilities in both capital projects and activation (mobility and vision impaired, etc.), involve citizens as leaders in the planning process, leverage opportunities with other agencies (SDOT, SPU, Metro) for more comprehensive transportation and access improvements; consider gap analysis in your planning; consider public health strategies.
- **Park District Oversight Committee – 2/9/2016**
 Presentation of the SPR Greenways Initiative. Feedback included; maintain consideration for pedestrians and walking, provide overview of major projects, identify and expand monitoring of performance measures; consider connections to transit where possible; and work with SDOT to coordinate connections.
- **Othello Station Community Action Team – 4/7/2016**
 Presentation of the SPR Greenways Initiative and obtained feedback on the proposed project at John C. Little Sr. Park. Feedback included desire to coordinate the improvements with the communities “Ribbon of Parks” plan; shift from pavement repair only focus to adding an east/west stair and path connection.
- **Greenways, Parks and Boulevards Stakeholders Meeting – 4/20/16**
 Stakeholders included representatives from Seattle Neighborhood Greenways, Seattle Trails Alliance, Feet First, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), Seattle Department of Neighborhoods (DON) and Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR). The meeting was focused on; the potential for integrating and enhancing Seattle Boulevards into the Neighborhood Greenway network; how **interdepartmental collaboration** (see flow chart in Appendix B) was critical for successful project implementation; and what goals and outcomes could come from a Greenways Parks and Boulevards workshop facilitated by Seattle Neighborhood Greenways.
- **Greenways, Parks and Boulevards Workshop – 6/27/2016**
 Facilitated by Seattle Neighborhood Greenways and co-sponsored by the SPR Greenways Initiative, this workshop looked at how interdepartmental collaboration and certain design principles could help Seattle Boulevards function more equitably as both parks and transportation for all. Workshop participants included neighborhood, non-profit and design community leaders as well as representatives from city departments including SPR, SDOT, DON, Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development and the Seattle Office of Sustainability and Environment. Non-profits represented included the Seattle Parks

Foundation, Friends of Seattle Olmsted Parks, the Trust for Public Land, Feet First, and the Cascade Bicycle Club.

- **Rainier Beach Community Meeting, Walking Audit and Ice Cream Social – 7/12/2016**
SPR coordinated this event with Feet First to present an overview of the Greenways Initiative, solicit feedback about the greater initiative as well as feedback specific to the Rainier Beach Playfield site. There were 15 participants. (event photo below)



Figure 9: Greenways Ice Cream Social
Source: SPR Planning Department

- **SDOT North Seattle Greenway Open House – 7/27/2016**
SPR Greenways Initiative shared information, presentation boards and collected surveys at this SDOT lead open house. SPR's presence was in coordination with SDOT Neighborhood Greenways team and anticipation of a future SPR Greenways Initiative project at Soundview Playfield connecting the completed 17th Ave north/south Neighborhood Greenway with the proposed 92nd St east/west Neighborhood Greenway.
- **SDOT West Seattle Greenway Open House – 8/4/2016**
SPR Greenways Initiative shared information, presentation boards and collected surveys at this SDOT lead open house. SPR's presence was in coordination with SDOT Neighborhood Greenways team and anticipation of a future SPR Greenways Initiative project at Walt Hundley Playfield.
- **Engage Seattle, Bitter Lake Community Center Open House – 12/3/2016**
SPR Greenways Initiative shared information, presentation boards and collected surveys at this Department of Neighborhoods lead open house (over 100 community participants and project information from Seattle Housing Affordability and Livability, Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development, SDOT Neighborhood Greenways, Seattle Human Services Department, Office of Sustainability and the Environment, Metro Rapid Ride and Democracy Vouchers).

- **Engage Seattle, West Seattle Open House – 12/7/2016**
SPR Greenways Initiative shared information, presentation boards and collected surveys at this Department of Neighborhoods lead open house (over 75 community participants and project information from Seattle Housing Affordability and Livability, Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development, SDOT Neighborhood Greenways, Seattle Human Services Department, Office of Sustainability and the Environment, Metro Rapid Ride and Democracy Vouchers).
- **Engage Seattle, Ravenna Eckstein Community Center Open House – 12/13/2016**
SPR Greenways Initiative shared information, presentation boards and collected surveys at this Department of Neighborhoods lead open house (over 100 community participants and project information from Seattle Housing Affordability and Livability, Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development, SDOT Neighborhood Greenways, Seattle Human Services Department, Office of Sustainability and the Environment, Metro Rapid Ride and Democracy Vouchers).

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

Surveys

The Greenways Initiative survey (see Appendix E) contains nine questions about year-round parks usage, basic amenities to improve bicycle and foot travel, and other accessibility issues. Surveys were administered online through Survey Monkey and as hard copies. In addition, the survey collected demographic information (age, zip code, race, etc.) to determine who is already using local parks. Finally, survey takers who wanted to stay engaged and informed about local efforts in activating neighborhood greenways had the option to share personal information. Between August and December 2016, surveys were distributed at local festivals and community meetings to develop a baseline understanding about current biking and walking experiences around neighborhoods. All survey takers received pedometers for their time.



Figure 10: Feet First Walking Audit
Source: John C Little Sr. Park 12/12 Audit

Focus Groups

In an effort to engage populations that are currently underrepresented in conversations regarding neighborhood greenways and capital improvement projects, the evaluation team conducted focus groups with impacted stakeholders. Working with local partners who had strong community ties to neighborhoods in South Seattle, the team identified four population groups that could offer unique perspectives and articulate challenges in greenways implementation for their community. Between October and November 2016, the evaluation team spoke to Somali mothers involved in

a local safety taskforce, African American teenagers who participate in after-school services at a local community center, Vietnamese seniors who use a multi-service nonprofit servicing the Asian-American community, and athletes affiliated with a specialized sports program.

Focus group sessions were limited to 6 to 9 community participants to ensure everyone in the room had ample time to speak and listen. In order to compensate focus group participants for their time and expertise, they received culturally-appropriate meals, childcare, \$100 gift card, and other Greenways goodies like pedometers, chalk, and emergency whistles. Spanning 90 minutes, all groups covered questions (see Appendix F) about community involvement, barriers to participating in city processes, and discussions about the scope of the Greenways Initiative. All focus groups were led by a skilled facilitator with a strong background in community capacity building, who was instrumental in enforcing ground rules (see Appendix G), directed the flow of conversation, and identified common themes among groups. In focus groups where language barriers were an expressed concern by community advocates, a translator was present. All focus groups were audio and videotaped with prior consent from participants.

EVALUATION FINDINGS: SURVEYS

Noncompliance and Bad Data

Early in the evaluation process, the evaluation team experienced issues gleaning accurate data from online responses to the survey. Originally intended to be shared within predetermined networks in South Seattle to understand area-specific needs, the survey link was accidentally shared with a wider audience than planned, which resulted in overrepresentation from participants in North Seattle, who had interests outside of the Greenways Initiative. It was determined that the online survey data did not tap the intended subject pool and information collected derailed the research process and affected researchers' ability to do a true impact evaluation. Furthermore, the online data collection tool, Survey Monkey, was ineffective capturing ranked data, which skewed results significantly.

After consulting with a third party data analyst, the evaluation team concluded that the best way proceed was to move towards a single mode of data collection: hard copy surveys obtained at relevant outreach events. Since the evaluation team collected 77 hard copy surveys, the decision was made to solely focus on those data points for analysis.

Data Breakdown

- **Survey Language**

Greenways surveys were available in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Somali. *Of the 77 surveys completed, English speakers were the most represented in the dataset.*

Survey Language Breakdown:

- English: 61 respondents (79.22%)
- Somali: 8 respondents (10.39%)
- Spanish: 1 respondent (1.30%)
- Vietnamese: 7 respondents (9.09%)

- **Zip Code**

Survey takers from 23 local zip codes offered valuable feedback to the survey. *Of the 71 survey takers who reported their zip codes; respondents from Ballard and Rainier Valley made up over 35% of the total surveys completed.*

Top 5 Zip Code Breakdown:

- Ballard: 9 respondents (19.48%)
- Rainier Valley: 8 respondents (15.58%)
- West Seattle: 7 respondents (11.69%)
- Georgetown: 7 respondents (11.69%)
- Central District: 5 respondents (6.49%)

- **Age**

Survey takers ranged from 13 to 76 years old, with the average age of 44.5 years. *Of the 71 survey takers who reported their zip codes; respondents aged 36 to 50 were the most represented in the dataset.*

Age Group Breakdown:

- 0 to 19 years old: 4 respondents (5.19%)
- 20 to 35 years old: 14 respondents (18.18%)
- 36 to 50 years old: 30 respondents (38.96%)
- 51 to 65 years old: 16 respondents (20.78%)
- 65+ years old: 7 respondents (9.09%)

- **Race**

Survey takers from multiple racial categories participated in the survey. *Of the 70 survey takers who reported their race; respondents who identified as White were the most represented in the dataset.*

Race Breakdown:

- White: 39 respondents (50.65%)
- Black: 12 respondents (15.58%)
- Asian: 11 respondents (14.29%)
- Biracial: 5 respondents (6.49%)
- Hispanic: 3 respondents (3.90%)

- **Gender**

Survey takers from the two primary gender identities shared their insight. *Of the 68 survey takers who reported their gender; females were the most represented in the dataset.*

Gender Breakdown:

- Female: 52 respondents (67.53%)
- Male: 16 respondents (20.78%)

- **Years in Seattle**

Survey takers' estimates on how long they've lived in Seattle range from less than a year to 60 years, with an average of 17.5 years. *Of the 72 survey takers who reported how long they've lived in the city; respondents who have lived in Seattle between 13 and 25 years were the most represented in the dataset.*

Years in Seattle Breakdown:

- 0 to 4 years: 12 respondents (15.58%)
- 5 to 12 years: 17 respondents (22.08%)
- 13 to 25 years: 29 respondents (37.66%)
- 26 to 40 years: 10 respondents (12.99%)
- 41+ years: 4 respondents (5.19%)

- **Marketing for Greenways Events**

Survey takers were asked how they heard about Greenways activation events. *Of the 56 survey takers who answered; respondents who visited parks by chance on the days of events were the most represented in the dataset.*

Marketing for Greenways Events Breakdown:

- Flyers, signs, etc.: 10 respondents (12.99%)
- Friend/Family: 13 respondents (16.88%)
- Social Media: 7 respondents (9.09%)
- Visited park by chance: 16 respondents (20.78%)
- Website or blog: 10 respondents (12.99%)

- **Frequency of Parks Use**

Survey takers were asked how often they visit their local parks. *Of the 77 survey takers who answered; respondents who visited parks often (multiple times a week) were the most represented in the dataset.*

Frequency of Parks Use Breakdown:

- Often (multiple times a week): 41 respondents (53.25%)
- Somewhat often (about once a week): 23 respondents (29.87%)
- Not very often (about once a month): 8 respondents (10.39%)
- Rarely (only a few times a year): 5 respondents (6.49%)

- **Recommendations for Improvement**

Survey takers were asked they wish to see more of at local parks. *Of the 58 survey takers who answered, respondents who wanted to see more events at local parks were the most represented in the dataset.*

Areas for Improvement Breakdown:

- More Events: 18 respondents (23.38%)
- More Amenities (Restrooms, Trees, Water Stations, etc.): 9 respondents (11.69%)
- More Protected Parks Trails: 9 respondents (11.69%)
- More Safety Features: 7 respondents (9.09%)
- More Playground Equipment: 6 respondents (7.79%)
- More Maintenance Work: 4 respondents (5.19%)
- Other: 5 respondents (6.49%)

- **Familiarity with Greenways Initiative**

Survey takers were asked if they are familiar with the scope and goals of the Greenways Initiative. *Of the 74 survey takers who answered, respondents who were not very familiar with the initiative were the most represented in the dataset.*

Familiarity with Greenways Initiative Breakdown:

- Not At All Familiar: 23 respondents (30.26%)
- Not Very Familiar: 26 respondents (34.21%)
- Somewhat Familiar: 21 respondents (27.63%)
- Very familiar: 4 respondents (5.26%)

- **Activities in and around Parks**

Survey takers were asked how they travel in and around local parks. *Of the 77 survey takers who answered; respondents who only walked and biked at local parks were the most represented in the dataset.*

Parks Activities Breakdown:

- Biking and Walking: 32 respondents (41.56%)
- Biking and Walking and Other Activity: (Dog Walking, Playground Equipment, Sports, etc.): 12 respondents (15.58%)
- Walking alone: 23 respondents (29.87%)
- Walking and Other Activity (Dog Walking, Playground Equipment, Sports, etc.): 7 respondents (9.09%)
- Biking alone: 1 respondent (1.30%)
- Other Activity (Dog Walking, Playground Equipment, Sports, etc.): 2 respondents (2.60%)

- **Elements Related to Walking and Biking that are Important**

Survey takers were asked which elements related to walking and biking were most important to them. *By aggregating responses across race and zip code categories, the ‘greenery’ option was the most represented in the dataset.* The next two options valued by survey takers were ‘smooth pavements’ and ‘safety features’ respectively.

- **Types of Activities at Greenways Events**

Survey takers were asked which type of activities they would like at future greenways events. By aggregating responses across race and zip code categories, the ‘kid’s activities’ option was the most represented in the dataset. The next two options valued by survey takers were ‘music’ and ‘active demos’ respectively.

- **Questions/ Comments/ Concerns**

Survey takers were asked if they had lingering questions or feedback on the Greenways Initiative. *Of the 14 survey takers who answered; 9 respondents commented to express support for the initiative and the expansion of neighborhood greenways.*

- **Interested in Further Engagement**

Survey takers were asked if they wished to stay engaged with the department on developments regarding the Greenways Initiative. *Of the 19 survey takers who answered; all provided emails to keep in touch.*

LESSONS LEARNED: SURVEYS

It is important to note that while the findings in the section above provided useful information about community needs, the overrepresentation of survey takers from North Seattle skewed results to underscore their preferences. A separate analysis was performed against the race category to highlight interesting trends noticed among the underrepresented groups of survey takers. The following observations emerged from the dataset:

- Survey takers who identified as Asian ranked ‘Safety Features’ as most important criteria for elements that would improve their walking and biking experiences.
- Survey takers who identified as Black ranked ‘Smooth Pavements’ as the most important criteria for elements that improve their walking and biking experience.
- Based on frequency of parks visits and presence at Greenways events, greenways were more than 5 times likely to be used by people who identify as White than any other racial group.
- Conversely, people who identify as Black used parks with the least amount of frequency. Of the 41 survey takers (31.30% of the total) who reported using parks often (multiple times a week), 25 respondents were White, while 4 were Black.
- Awareness of Greenways initiative was highest amongst whites.
- Conversely, awareness of Greenways initiative was lowest among respondents who identify as Black and Hispanic. Of the 25 survey takers who reported being ‘Very Familiar’ and ‘Somewhat Familiar’ (32.89% of the total) with the initiative, 17 respondents were White, while 4 respondents were either Black or Hispanic.
- Walking was the most common activity in parks and greenways across races and zip codes than biking.
- Conversely, biking was more favorable to survey takers who identified as White. Of the 45 survey takers who reported biking at parks (58.44% of the total), 27 respondents were White, while 14 respondents were people of color who bike at parks.
- Of the 19 survey takers who expressed interest in connecting with the department on the Greenways Initiative, 9 respondents (47.4%) were White.

EVALUATION FINDINGS: FOCUS GROUP

Somali Mothers Focus Group

On Saturday, October 29th, the evaluation team met nine Somali mothers who are active in the Somali Family Safety Task Force and live in the New Holly neighborhood. All participants report living in Seattle for at least 12 years. The evaluation team and an interpreter shared local Somali fare (rice, chicken, salad, and milk tea) with participants and spoke generally about their unmet needs at local parks and community centers. The following themes emerged over the course of the discussions:



Figure 11: Somali Mothers Focus Group
Source: 10/29 Community Meeting

- **Definition of community**

The focus group participants viewed community in the context of the services and connections that the Somali Family Safety Task Force provides them. By offering services like computer literacy classes and basket-weaving courses, the organization is a vital resource that builds community for the focus group participants and their families.

- **Travel around the neighborhood**

Most of the focus group participants reported enjoying walking around their neighborhoods, but do so usually in groups. While they primarily travel around their neighborhoods by car, they walk to their destinations more during the summer months.

- **Perceptions of safety**

While the Somali mothers we spoke to reported no major issues with safety in their local parks, multiple focus group members said they still walk as a group for safety reasons. They also used parks more during summertime when more people were around. During winter months, participants felt more security, patrol cars, and lighting would alleviate safety concerns for themselves and their children. Focus group members seemed to be in agreement that Van Asselt Community Center and the basketball courts in New Holly parks would benefit from more safety features.

- **Performance of SPR staff in:**

- **Supporting active and healthy lifestyles**

Focus group members understood the importance of recreation on emotional and physical wellbeing on an individual. The benefits discussed include: boosting mood, burning calories, socializing with peers, and enjoying different physical activities for all ability levels. However, most focus group participants felt that they do not currently benefit from local parks and community centers in a healthy way. Discomfort while using public amenities like pools as Muslim women and the lack of tailored, women-only classes (aerobics, Zumba, etc.) were cited as primary barriers. They supported the idea of an indoor gym, where Muslim women could socialize and exercise. Increasing availability of classes and equipment at local community centers (Van Asselt Community Center) and recruiting more Muslim staff members who inherently understand the community's religious and cultural restrictions would help address some of these issues. Some participants also mentioned growing concerns about drug activity at local parks that prevent them from sending their children outdoors, contributing to obesity and unhealthy choices. However, there was some disagreement among the group if more security was necessary to address this issue. Everyone agreed that SPR needs to enforce some structure to ensure their children's safety.

- **Fostering welcoming and inclusive spaces**

All focus group participants said that SPR staff were typically welcoming. They cited instances where staff directed them to scholarships for low-income clients, provided spaces for women to pray, and engaged in a friendly manner with them. However, some participants felt that while staff do their best to remain inclusive, choices in unique programming and access to services offered are limited. As one participant put it, "When

we're there we feel welcome but we aren't there often.” Some participants attributed this challenge to cultural disparity. For example, public rules about appropriate swimming attire were barriers to participation for many Muslim women. Other participants reported there were few programs available for parents and senior citizens, and even fewer options for Muslim and immigrant patrons. They added that programs at local parks and community centers felt geared only towards children. The focus group participants reiterated that they rely on community groups like the Somali Family Safety Task Force for healthy opportunities as a result. The group agreed that more programs for parents and kids to enjoy together would improve participation in local parks and community centers.

➤ **Maintaining a responsive communication style**

Participants in the focus group felt the department could do more to maintain communication with them. Some members felt having a point a point of contact within the department, preferably a woman of color or Muslim staff member serving as a liaison would bridge the existing communication gap. One member voiced concerns that Parks boards are missing representatives from the Somali community. She reiterated that the presence of people from immigrant or refugee communities in influential Parks positions would make the City more responsive and incentivize better communication from communities. Yet another participant vented frustrations with many City departments that come into communities, especially low-income communities, under the guise of research and outreach, collect personal stories, and promise change that never came. The effects of gentrification, low wages, and worries about their children’s futures are pressing concerns that makes life in South Seattle difficult. Several participants agreed with this argument that the City does not adequately address safety and access concerns and fails to convey how initiatives like the Greenways Initiative will remain effective over the next few months or years in neighborhoods like New Holly.

• **Opinions about greenways**

Overall, most focus participants felt the introduction of greenways to their neighborhoods would improve safety concerns, primarily for their children who walk and bike at and near local parks. One participant expressed concerns that more pedestrian- and bike-friendly paths would promote gentrification and make living in New Holly expensive. Yet another participant added that reduced speed limits may increase police involvement and attract traffic citations and tickets for people in the neighborhood who currently do not worry about speeding.

African American Teens Focus Group

On Friday, November 4th, the evaluation team met eight African American teens who live in Rainier Valley and use the local community center’s after school programs. The evaluation team provided the participants pizza, fruit and water and engaged them on issues they experienced during foot and bicycle travel in the neighborhood. The following themes emerged over the course of the discussions:

• **Definition of community**

Community for these teenagers is the Rainier Valley neighborhood, where all but one focus group participant, have spent their entire lives. All participants in the group said community mattered because it's where they live, go to school, and play with friends.

- **Travel around the neighborhood**

Focus group participants used different means of transportation (bus, car, walk, and bike) to get to their neighborhood hot spots. During night time and the summer months when there were increases in gang activity, the teenagers preferred getting rides instead of walking or biking. They also reported that weather conditions affected their choice of transportation.

- **Perceptions of safety:**

Focus group participants expressed that safety concerns have recently been alleviated since more neighborhood watches (such as “Be Safe”) have been active around their community. However, the teens agreed that this increase did not coincide with safer driving practices among motorists. Multiple participants agreed that cars do not usually stop for bicyclists and often speed in residential streets, despite additions like speed bumps. Participants were largely skeptical that creation of greenways could improve safety conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians without exacerbating the traffic delays that already exist.

- **Performance of SPR staff in:**

- **Supporting active and healthy lifestyles**

Focus group participants agreed that SPR staff supports healthy recreational opportunities and they held favorable opinions about their local community center programs and parks amenities. Some of the programs at the Rainier Valley Community Center that participants mentioned kept them motivated and entertained include: cooking classes, basketball competitions, flag football, boxing, tennis, swimming, yoga, Zumba and hip hop classes, fairs, camping trips, mentoring programs. Participants also appreciated barbeque pits, basketball courts, and venues for community activities like birthday parties at local parks that keep them engaged outdoors. More than half of the participants said the diverse array of programs offered keep young adults out of trouble.

- **Fostering welcoming and inclusive spaces**

Overall, focus group participants felt SPR staff make them feel welcome and connect with them about their background and interests. However, older participants felt high schoolers and older teenagers were not allowed at parks and community centers at certain times and would like to see more unrestricted access at later hours.

- **Maintaining a responsive communication style**

Focus group participants rated the SPR staff they interacted with as very responsive to ideas and suggestions and felt they had great communication with staff. Some participants mentioned the community center had conducted focus groups in the past, where they were consulted on issues and necessary changes were implemented based on feedback. Participants said they usually approach SPR staff about complaints and ideas, but one participant added that comment boxes would be a good addition to the feedback collection process. However, when it came to parks, some participants felt broken and neglected

equipment (water fountains, basketball nets, etc.) tended to stay broken for long periods of time.

- **Opinions about greenways**

Overall, focus group participants were skeptical about the introduction of neighborhood greenways in their community. While one participant mentioned prioritizing bicycle and foot travel on certain roads could improve safety, the rest of the focus group members felt greenways would have either minimal or negative impacts. Some participants thought speeding was such a persistent issue that speed limits and traffic barriers like speed bumps would have no impact. Even more participants felt components of the Greenways Initiative would worsen traffic delays and create more accidents. Participants who got around primarily by bicycle and foot agreed that they already had dedicated routes to their destinations and having better access to a greenway nearby would not encourage them to change their routes.

Vietnamese Seniors Focus Group

On Tuesday, November 8th, the evaluation team and an interpreter met eight Vietnamese seniors who were part of ACRS' aging services programs. All participants, but one, were retired active members of Club Bamboo, where they gathered multiple times a week to practice yoga, dance, share food, etc. The evaluation team enjoyed a meal consisting of rice, seafood stew, and a traditional gourd dessert. Conversations centered mainly on safety issues, but the following themes emerged over the course of the discussions:



Figure 12: Vietnamese Seniors Focus Group
11/8 Community Meeting

- **Definition of community**

Focus group participants defined community as a place where they could socialize, speak their respective languages, and practice their cultural traditions with peers. While all focus group participants in the room were Vietnamese, they enjoyed interacting with friends who are Laotian, Pilipino, Cambodian, etc. at ACRS. The organizational culture of ACRS really values culture and has activities like yoga, board games, and dance to keep their seniors engaged. They were grateful for organizations like ACRS that provided them opportunities to be physically healthy and emotionally connected to friends.

- **Travel around the neighborhood**

Focus group participants reported they travel extensively by car and bus to get to City and county parks. Several participants reported visiting Seward Park, Jefferson Park, and Othello Playground in South Seattle and also several parks in Tukwila, Auburn and Renton. Once there, they said their children and grandchildren use bicycles, while they walk to get their exercise. They also said they often use amenities like barbeque pits and picnic areas for social and family gatherings.

- **Perceptions of safety:**

Focus group participants overwhelmingly agreed that safety is a top concern when they visit local parks. Citing sexual assaults and thefts in local parks like Seward Park, participants argued that regular patrols and better lighting may better address the issue. Focus group members reported walking in pair or groups and carrying emergency whistles and their cell phones for protection. Participants noted that they do not often know relevant crime statistics and would appreciate that information available online and on Parks bulletin boards in multiple languages, including Vietnamese.

- **Performance of SPR staff in:**

- **Supporting active and healthy lifestyles**

Focus group participants felt they do not interact meaningfully with SPR or City staff since they turn to one-stop shops like ACRS to receive all their services. Most seniors felt disengaged and discouraged from participating in key decision-making processes. However, participants valued their local parks and added they savor the chance to go outdoors, get fresh air, and connect with neighbors. They also agreed that more cultural programming at local parks like dances, games, and other family-friendly outdoor events would improve SPR's role in supporting active and healthy lifestyles for seniors.

- **Fostering welcoming and inclusive spaces**

Focus group participants expressed that while local parks and community centers are generally welcoming, they do not get to enjoy parks as much as they would like because they are located far apart from their homes and bus passes are expensive. They felt they have more opportunities to be healthy and connected at community hubs like ACRS that offer complimentary bus passes, van services, meals, and recreation activities for seniors with fixed incomes. One participant appreciated Bike Sundays and expressed interest in year-round safe routes for walking and biking to satisfy her interest in exercising outdoors.

- **Maintaining a responsive communication style**

Focus group participants agreed that they do not communicate concerns or ideas with SPR staff at the moment because they were not aware they could talk directly to staff and get specific issues addressed. Focus group participants approved of bulletin boards and prominently displayed phone numbers of a point of contact to report issues at and ideas for local parks and community centers.

- **Opinions about greenways**

Most focus group members agreed that neighborhood greenways would improve safety conditions in South Seattle and make walking routes that connected to local parks more attractive. Since participants cited distance from parks as a barrier to frequent use, local greenways would serve as alternate routes and better connect parks to where they live. One participant mentioned that more wayfinding signs and speed bumps would subconsciously alert drivers to the presence of bicyclists and pedestrians, making residential streets even safer. Few participants cited traffic delays and damages to cars by speed bumps and other traffic inhibitors, but overall, participants of the focus group were enthusiastic about the greenways coming to South Seattle.

Specialized Sports Athletes Focus Group

On Saturday, November 12th, the evaluation team met nine wheelchair-bound athletes (and their guardians), who participate in Seattle Adaptive Sports' weekly basketball games at Miller Community Center. Most participants live in Seattle, but some traveled from as far as Bellevue to participate in the games. The team provided participants healthy sandwiches, cookies, fruit, and water before delving into issues about accessibility and inclusion. The following themes emerged over the course of the discussions:



Figure 13: Specialized Sports Athletes Focus Group
Source: 11/12 Community Meeting

- **Definition of community**

Focus group participants conveyed that groups like SAS that provide rare and continuous recreation services for the disabled are important for their health, self-esteem, and general well-being. While athletes come from all over Puget Sound, some as far away as Tacoma, they value the community-building aspect and empowerment focus of SAS.

- **Travel around the neighborhood**

Focus group participants mostly drive to their neighborhood destinations, but some participants reported using the bus to get around.

- **Perceptions of safety:**

All focus group participants shared safety concerns they experience at local parks and community centers. A few focus group participants felt that many well-attended parks like Volunteer Park lack sufficient curb cuts for safer crossing that, in turn, forces them to go on busy streets to get into parks and community centers. Others expressed fear in going to parks and community centers late at night because of insufficient lighting at parking lots and crosswalks. Two participants mentioned steep ramps at parks with boat launches like Greenlake Park that makes aquatic sports and recreation challenging.

- **Performance of SPR staff in:**

- **Supporting active and healthy lifestyles**

Despite program offerings by Specialized Programs, focus group participants agreed that SPR can do more to encourage active lifestyles for physically disabled people. In addition to the lack of curb cuts, participants shared that more crosswalks at and around parks would improve their experience. Amenities like wayfinding signs that indicate ADA accessible paths at parks, shallow ramps, and adequate parking would also help support healthy lifestyles for patrons in wheelchairs. Most participants agreed that certain materials used for trails make navigating around parks challenging. All participants agreed that wood chips in trails, playground areas and dog parks causes mobility issues. Loose gravel is even more problematic and many parks like Volunteer and Magnuson use

this material around amenities like public restrooms that make access challenging. Going uphill in trails with woodchips and gravel compromises balance and increases resistance. Multiple participants also indicated there were an insufficient number of parking spots at large parks like Greenlake. A mother of a wheelchair-bound athlete mentioned handicapped parking spots are often narrow and do not comfortably accommodate specialized equipment like chair lifts. The group was in agreement that as programs like SAS and Specialized Programs expand, parking needs should be addressed. Finally, the group reiterated that structured competitive programs like SAS are rare, forcing some athletes to travel great distances to play. Participants felt SPR's continued partnership with organizations like SAS would show the department's commitment to providing healthy opportunities for this often-overlooked group.

➤ **Fostering welcoming and inclusive spaces**

While most focus group participants enjoyed active lifestyles and outdoor activities like dog walking, rowing, kayaking, tennis, and basketball, they shared recommendations to address existing accessibility issues and make parks and community centers more inclusive of wheelchair-bound patrons. Most participants agreed having alternate paths (instead of stairs and gravel paths) would make them feel welcomed. Other participants felt wider doors and double doorways to common areas like bathrooms and gyms would make parks and community centers more ADA friendly. They agreed newer buildings are equipped with these features, but older community centers like Greenlake Community Center would benefit from widening entryways to fit wheelchairs and other specialized equipment. Finally, participants talked about their experiences with SPR staff as being crucial to feeling included and welcome in parks and community centers. Many participants indicated that most staff members have been helpful and make reasonable accommodations, which greatly improved their experience while they visited parks and community centers. Some focus group participants echoed a desire to see more front line SPR staff trained in ADA-approved techniques, so they could better manage expectations of wheelchair-bound clients and minimize potential harm. For example, one participant reported observing a staff member haphazardly assisting a client out of a wheelchair.

➤ **Maintaining a responsive communication style**

Focus group participants had many ideas about ways SPR could connect with and inform patrons who use wheelchairs about upcoming capital improvement projects. Some ways they proposed communicating updates include: comment cards at local parks and community centers, access maps available online and at local parks that show gradient and incline of parks trails and ramps, and a newsletter that highlights upcoming ADA-compliant changes to parks. Most focus group participants supported the idea of a regularly updated website or blog that addresses accessibility issues at local parks and community centers and advertises upcoming events well in advance. One participant championed the idea of a wheelchair critic who would visit parks, test for ADA compliance, and share findings online or in a newsletter for wheelchair-bound people interested in visiting new parks and community centers. Overall, focus group participants felt SPR needs to solicit public feedback often and through diverse mediums before making important ADA-related decisions. According to a majority of the participants, the availability of resources like ADA-compliant bathrooms in parks like Greenlake also

needs to be frequently communicated since they felt that many people do not know they exist. To that end, many participants supported dedicated ADA liaisons or coordinators at parks and community centers to answer questions on issues that affect them.

- **Opinions about greenways**

All focus group participants supported an extended network of neighborhood greenways and ongoing capital improvement projects at parks, but offered feedback to make changes beneficial for them. Most participants agreed that increasing trail width to support wide turns and cruising on a wheelchair would be helpful. One participant cited Bike Sundays as the type of program that should be expanded. Another participant added better wayfindings signs that indicate whether a street is ADA-compliant would be helpful, while a parent of a wheelchair-bound athlete mentioned the need for stronger speed limits to be effective.

LESSONS LEARNED: FOCUS GROUPS

Somali Mothers Group

- Safety is an important issue for Somali mothers who live in the New Holly neighborhood. While they currently underutilize parks and community centers, they are worried about their children's safety when they walk, bike, and play. Increased lighting and security presence were discussed as means to improve safety in parks.
- Finding community gatekeepers in underserved communities like New Holly accelerates relationships necessary for future collaborations with the City. Community advocates have pre-existing relationships with community members who may be currently inaccessible or disengaged with departmental projects. As these gatekeepers are consulted frequently about upcoming projects and events, the city's overall access to the people who rely on their services may improve over time.
- The lack of culturally-appropriate programming at local parks and community centers means few Muslim women use parks most of the year. While there was great interest among the Somali women in the focus group in connecting with community outdoors and at other public gatherings, the lack of incentives and opportunities tailored to their needs prevent this from happening.
- The underrepresentation of Muslim and immigrant populations in both service delivery roles and leadership positions with the City results in an incomplete and disjointed understanding of community needs. The participants of this focus group were interested in pursuing more civic opportunities, which they felt would improve the community's engagement levels with City service providers and processes.

African American Teen Group

- Participants were initially hesitant to participate but eventually opened up and shared insights that were enriching to the discussion. The group facilitator made deliberate attempts to get each participant to reiterate individual interests and share personal stories to justify their positions. By soliciting personal experiences, the evaluation team was able to

draw out quieter respondents and get a more complete understanding of the issues discussed.

- Providing attractive incentives at the end of the session was an intentional strategy for this group. Since the focus groups were voluntary and participants could leave at any time, keeping teenage participants engaged and on track was challenging at times. By dispensing gift cards and other freebies as a token of gratitude at the end, the team was able to minimize attrition effects associated with early departure.
- Despite this group's initial hesitance, a few focus group participants expressed appreciation to the evaluation team for the opportunity to talk. In addition to receiving gift cards and free food, the teenagers were excited to contribute as evidenced by certain points in the discussions, where multiple participants were speaking passionately at the same time. In this case, interest in sharing was not conflated as disrespect for the ground rules outlined earlier since conversations were productive in nature.

Vietnamese Seniors Group

- This community derives many benefits from multiservice agencies like ACRS that provide health, social, and economic support under one roof. ACRS already works with several governmental departments and area nonprofits to provide comprehensive access to safety nets for those who need them. Future collaboration and outreach to similar organizations that are well connected would improve community ties with active but underserved populations.
- The feedback from focus group participants highlighted how much this group value personal safety. Most participants strongly believed in a dual approach consisting of personal accountability and SPR policy changes to address safety concerns.
- Focus group participants expressed great confidence in the SPR's work, but felt limited in their ability to engage in City processes in more meaningful ways as evidenced by them not knowing how to get in touch with City departments. They were eager to share feedback, showed gratitude for being included in greenways decision-making processes, and expressed interest in being involved in future focus groups.

Specialized Sports Athletes Group

- Focus group participants agreed that physical access to parks is often challenging due to ADA non-compliance at many popular parks. SPR's policies need to better address mobility access to ensure more people in wheelchairs are able to use public resources.
- In order to create robust ADA policies that meet the minimum requirements to safely accommodate wheelchair-bound clients, SPR needs to actively collaborate and consult with community partners and people with physical disabilities during planning and implementation stages. At present, the community feels disenfranchised and undervalued.
- Focus group participants shared concerns about ADA-accessible bathrooms, playgrounds, and trails. In addition to simply not being able to use these amenities at some locations, participants shared that inadequate information about existing resources results in underutilization. Front line SPR staff need basic ADA training to assist and adequately answer public's questions about available resources for special-needs clients.

GREENWAYS INITIATIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Equitable Participation

In the 2016 baseline year, targeted outreach at local festivals and focus groups with select populations allowed underserved populations the opportunity to interact meaningfully with SPR. Focus groups were entirely constructed to provide people from underrepresented communities the chance to discuss ideas and concerns regarding proposed capital improvement projects. While the results from the surveys collected does show an overrepresentation of individuals who identify as White (39 total), the sum of survey takers of color (31 total) make representation somewhat comparable. Furthermore, many survey takers who identified as White were from South Seattle and provided valuable information about the community where they live. Of the 39 White respondents, 20 resided in neighborhoods in South Seattle. In summary, SPR was effective in promoting equitable participation among underserved communities, but could improve strategies to further engage people of color and the underserved in coming years.

Community Partnerships

In the 2016 baseline year, the evaluation and outreach team focused on building new community partnerships and strengthening existing relationships with local organizations that cater to underserved populations. SPR met with seven unique organizations regarding local greenways. In summary, SPR was effective in creating collaborations with new community partners and should focus on nurturing these relationships in coming years.

Stakeholder Satisfaction

Since 2016 was the baseline year, long-term impacts of community engagement efforts cannot be measured. SPR should check in periodically with community stakeholders discussed in this report to ensure all engaged parties are satisfied with final decisions and policies regarding the Greenways Initiative and its implementation.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Community capacity building for populations that are currently disengaged from discussions about Parks capital projects require that SPR harness the existing human potential and expertise of impacted stakeholders to inform public policy and budgetary decisions. An inclusive approach to research is the community-based participatory research methodology that involves community members, departmental leaders, and research teams collaborating early and often in planning and implementation stages to increase knowledge and understanding of issues, contribute expertise, and share decision-making and ownership of resulting policies and decisions. Future evaluations should focus on two goals: understanding how residents of South Seattle think and feel about upcoming Greenways projects as a means to promote health, safety and social equity and developing local community leadership that collaborates with the department and City to create benefit-maximizing decisions and outcomes.

While inclusive community outreach can be tedious work, it results in improved contact with members of underserved communities who have been historically disenfranchised and ignored. It is important for City departments to not only continue developing engagement opportunities with underserved community members, but also to lay the foundation for sustainable community collaborations in the future. Future evaluations should focus on the following principles to build on the work performed in the 2016 baseline year:

Community Engagement Practices

- Free services, goods, and resources are instrumental in incentivizing community members to participate in City processes. The evaluation team provided face painters, musicians and other kid-friendly artists and provided free chalk, pedometers, magnets, and whistles to drive traffic at engagement events. Similarly, focus group participants received food, childcare and gift cards for their contributions.
- While developing engagement materials and identifying data collection instruments, evaluation teams should not assume that a one-size-fits-all model community exists. For example, while translating engagement materials to different languages was helpful in connecting with certain communities, many illiterate community members did not benefit from the translated materials. In those cases, approaches like the Get Moving Initiative's Community Engagement Ambassadors model fit better at addressing language barriers.
- The *Community Engagement Model* (see diagram on page 40) outlines steps to replicate best practices for robust public engagement.

Community Contacts

- Staff without community contacts in South Seattle should attend as many public events and meetings as possible to identify prospective gatekeepers and build their network of connected advocates who are knowledgeable about health, land use, and transportation issues.
- Through community gatekeepers' extensive knowledge, the evaluation team should receive referrals and connections to community members who are prime candidates for focus group discussions and other engagement opportunities.
- Local parent-teacher associations, led by community volunteers who are already dialed into conversations about a neighborhood's safety and transportation conditions, could be an untapped resource for future discussions about neighborhood greenways.

Role of Staff During Focus Groups

- Evaluation teams should consider hiring third-party facilitators who are solely responsible for leading meetings, guiding discussions, and enforcing ground rules. Facilitators who do not have a neutral position may introduce unintended bias, causing participants to falsely align values and opinions with those of Greenways staff. For this study, the facilitator was a current SPR employee from another department with a background in building equity and working with underserved populations who use parks and community centers.
- Evaluation teams should clarify and agree on the roles of highly-involved internal stakeholders before focus groups convene. If Greenways staff are present during focus groups, they should adopt low-key roles as note takers or casual observers, only intervening to provide any facts requested. Having Greenways staff inject opinions actively in discussions could appear self-serving to the agenda of the City, validate negative opinions, and undermine the spirit of democratic participation for equitable decision-making.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MODEL: SPECTRUM OF PARTICIPATION



INFORM

CONSULT

INVOLVE

PARTNER

EMPOWER

Create flyers and informational resources about the city's ongoing work addressing key issue

Develop surveys to gather feedback and assess baseline community needs

Attend community meetings and local festivals to identify important community contacts

Recruit strong community gatekeepers to liaise with members of underserved communities

Assess ways to contribute to existing efforts to address issue and pool resources like time, money and contacts

Before
Engagement

Advertise opportunities for thicker participation like focus groups and provide attractive incentives for willing participants

Research community's experience with issue, paying special attention to historical and cultural context

Engage respectfully with the public to solicit personal stories and unique perspectives

Help impacted stakeholders articulate root causes of issue, develop viable alternatives, and identify solutions

Connect community members to the right City contacts to cultivate involvement in civic processes

During
Engagement

Follow up with previously-engaged participants about next steps and ensure their concerns are understood and acknowledged

Incorporate as much public input as possible and share trends and analyses with decision-makers

Vet all final decisions with the public and try to achieve community buy-in for proposed plans

Nurture existing community partnerships for sustainable working relationships in the future

Analyze strengths and weaknesses of current engagement efforts to improve community capacity building efforts

After
Engagement

CONCLUSION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS FROM THE AUTHOR

Community engagement is no easy task. Inclusive community engagement is even harder. More than organizing meetings that are open to the public, it entails making information accessible, building sustainable working relationships with diverse community stakeholders, and forwarding the collective goal of maximizing public benefits for all.

None of this work would have been possible without those who championed the inclusion of underrepresented communities, shared their expertise, personal stories and time, and taught me (and by proxy, the department) how to better support the vision of active and healthy communities. To that end, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the following people:

Sue Goodwin (SPR Strategic Advisor), for her progressive vision, thoughtful guidance, and unwavering support of this project. As an active member of SPR's RSJI Change Team, her wealth of institutional knowledge, passion for teaching, and commitment to equity-building work shaped the scope and direction of this evaluation.

Mike Schwindeller (SPR Capital Projects Coordinator), for his help providing the necessary information to fill in the gaps in technical knowledge, organizing community engagement events, and sharing the Greenways survey at appropriate events. This invaluable partnership helped solidify my baseline understanding of the initiative and its goals.

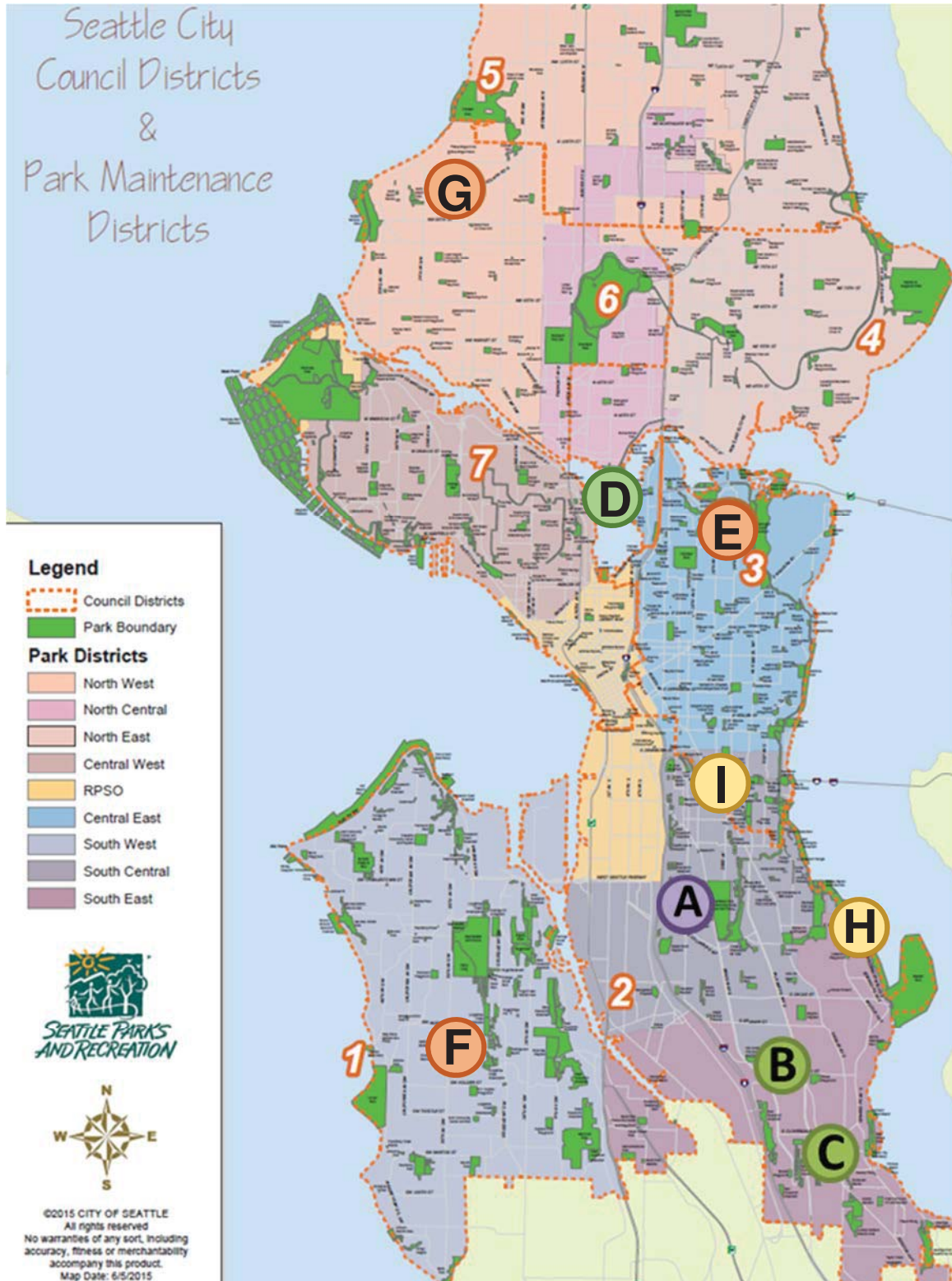
Farhiya Mohammed (Somali Family Safety Task Force), **Darren Anderson** (Rainier Beach Community Center), **Tracee Lee** (Asian Counseling and Referral Services), **Monica Le** (Asian Counseling and Referral Services), and **Tami English** (Seattle Adaptive Sports), for their hospitality, candor, and willingness to partner with SPR. These community gatekeepers illuminated the unique challenges to accessibility and inclusion their communities face and recruited community members for focus groups, who in turn, provided rich data for analysis.

Mafe Cobaleda, **Mohamud**, and **Duong** (Latina Creative Agency), for their professionalism, flexibility, and quality translation and translator work. Thanks for them; this evaluation was especially effective in engaging nonnative speakers of English in meaningful ways.

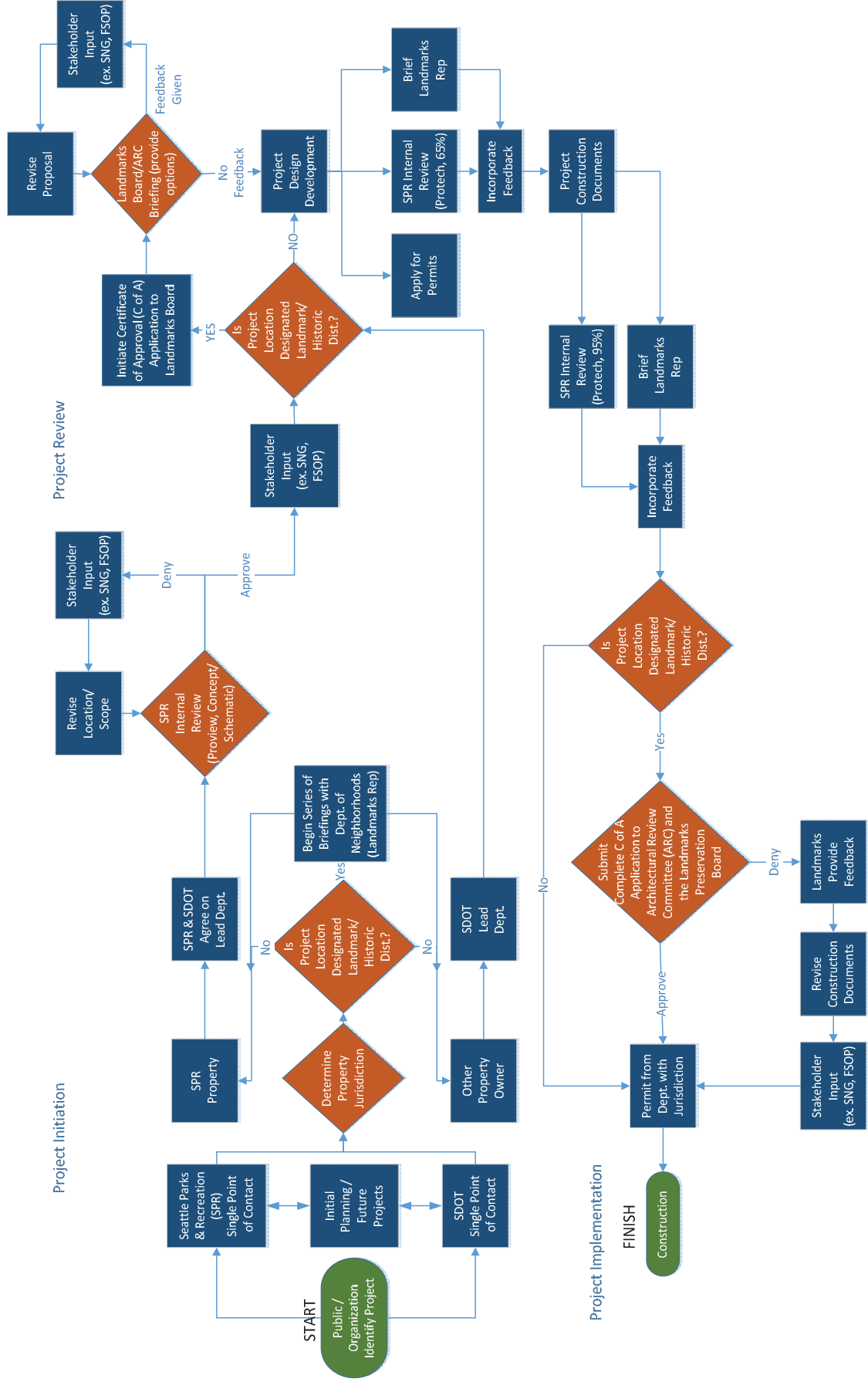
Kathleen Lake (Lake Family Research) and **Taylor Hagin** (Independent Data Analyst), for their expertise in quantitative and qualitative data analyses. These consultants helped reconcile issues with data cleanliness and shared best practices in trends identification that allowed me to glean accurate results and objective narratives from collected data.

And finally, **Wesley McIntosh** (SPR Research and Evaluation Aide) and **Stephanie Ung** (Focus Group Facilitator) for their warmth, humility, and compassion when interacting with and learning from underserved communities. From the very first day, they took their roles as community liaisons to heart and proudly represented the department throughout their involvement in the project. They helped make this project what it is.

APPENDIX A: CAPITAL PROJECTS PLAN MAP



APPENDIX B: SEATTLE GREENWAYS AND BOULEVARDS INTERDEPARTMENTAL PROJECT PROCESS



APPENDIX C: STATUS OF MAJOR GREENWAYS CAPITAL PROJECTS

| Proposed SPR Implementation | Park | Adjacent | SDOT Greenway Project | Proposed Improvements | Other/Notes | Cost Allocation |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------------|---|---|-----------------|
| 2015 Complete | Jefferson Park | 12th Ave S (and Jefferson Multi-Use trail) | 2016 | Drainage on 16th, parking formalized, SDOT contributed funds | Safe Routes to School Funds, improve connection to Asa Mercer School | \$80,000 |
| 2016 Complete | John C. Little Sr. Park | S Myrtle St. Greenway | 2015 | Connection near basketball courts. Trail pavement improvements to address root heave | Connection to Chief Sealth Trail/ New Holly, add new stair connection | \$60,000 |
| Construction Winter 2017 | Rainier Beach Playfield | 43RD Ave S / Rainier Valley Greenway | 2017 | Repave and widen existing asphalt path, add new path east of Dunlap School, connection to community center, playground & three schools. | SDOT Safe Routes to School is co-funding project. Root heave along entire path. | \$213,000 |
| 2016 Design 2017 Construct | Gas Works Park | Burke Gilman Trail | N/A | New sidewalk, bicycle parking | Connection with the Burke Gilman Trail | \$30,000 |
| 2016 Design 2017 Construct | Interlaken Blvd | 21st Ave E Greenway Central Area Greenway | 2015 | Stair access improvements, possible bike runnel | Scheduled construction by SDOT in 2017 | \$80,000 |
| 2017 | Walt Hundley Playfield | 34th Ave SW Greenway | 2017 | Bike Ramps / bike racks will connect to existing paths and High Point Community Center | West Seattle Elementary School | \$20,000 |
| 2017 Design 2018 Construct | SoundView Playfield | 17 th Ave NW Greenway 92nd St Greenway | 2015/ 2018 | Take fence down at NW 92nd St for access and collector to the start of the greenway, new connection to E/W Greenway wayfinding, bicycle parking | Connections to Whitman M.S. & North Beach Elementary | \$70,000 |
| 2018 | Genesee Playfield | 38 th Ave S / Rainier Valley Greenway | 2017 | Trail pavement improvements / trail widening, wayfinding | Rainier Community Center & Playfield connection | \$30,000 |
| 2018 | Judkins Park (Blanche Lavizzo Park) | Central Ridge Greenway | TBD | Wayfinding, pavement issues | Washington Middle School | TBD |

APPENDIX D: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT LOGIC MODEL

| OBJECTIVES | STRATEGIES | ACTIONS | OUTPUTS | DATES | OUTCOMES | IMPACTS |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Increase community input from underserved communities in South Seattle. | * Employ diverse data collection methods and strategies to reach more individuals and families | * Adopt data collection methods like focus groups, participant observations, and translated surveys. * Adopt various strategies like local festivals, online surveys, etc. | * Collected feedback in different languages (English, Somali, Spanish, Vietnamese) * Baseline community participation and knowledge about Greenways Initiative | * English flyers + surveys: Aug – Oct * 3 languages flyers + surveys: Oct – Nov * Events: August – mid Nov * Data Analysis: Nov-Dec | * Department hears multiple perspectives and values previously left out during planning phases | * Historically underrepresented groups feel validated and encouraged to participate in more City processes * More people with valuable input feel empowered to offer suggestions, concerns, and other feedback relevant to Greenways Initiative |
| Promote benefits of connected greenways for bicyclists and pedestrians of all ages and abilities in South Seattle | * Educate public at local festivals, cultural events, and community meetings regarding health, safety, and navigability outcomes | * Staff events (local festivals, cultural appreciation events) at areas where engagement/education is low * Provide attendees educational materials and material incentives (free giveaways + special events) | * Framework for future community outreach to underserved populations | * Events/ Meetings/Festivals: August – mid Nov * Data Analysis: Nov-Dec | * Parks improvements and Greenways development are on the radar of people living in South Seattle | |
| Build and maintain community partnerships with underrepresented groups and stakeholders | * Identify at least 6 community leaders & partners who understand distinct community needs by end of October * Identify best practices for effective outreach | * Introduce community gatekeepers (churches, nonprofits, schools, etc.) to local Parks projects, initiatives, and funding opportunities * Nurture relationships for future conversations re: neighborhood accessibility, health and safety concerns | * At least 4 1:1 interviews with community leaders * Baseline for department's current outreach efforts * Baseline for existing and new community partnerships | * Community gatekeepers outreach: Sept – Oct * Data Analysis: Nov-Dec | * Local leaders feel supported by City in talks about community development * Underserved communities are confident City has community's best interests in mind during project planning and implementation phases | |
| Catalog community needs and accessibility issues in Parks usage, with special focus on underserved neighborhoods. | Identify distinct community priorities in Greenways implementation. | Conduct focus groups with community members and leaders to discuss issues tied to safety and accessibility in parks other neighborhood hotspots. | * Flyers and surveys (English, Somali, Vietnamese, Spanish) * 4-5 focus groups in targeted communities | Somali Mothers 10/29 Vietnamese Seniors 11/8 AA Teens: 11/4 Specialized Sports: 11/12 | Feedback from newly-engaged stakeholders to incorporate into future Greenways projects | |
| Increase inventory of tools and strategies to support racial equity-building work | * Better understand the RSJI Initiative * Identify replicable models and how they can be modified for Parks projects | * Attend City-led RSJI trainings * Participate and support RSJI Change Team activities * Solicit advice from community leaders about successful groups who do similar work | * 8 hours of trainings on topics like implicit bias, cultural competency, equity lens, etc. * Identification of status quo and potential areas for improvement | * Trainings: Sept – Dec * Data Analysis: Aug - Dec | * Greenways staff better positioned to understand intersection of race and public policy in City functions | * Decision-makers value racially inclusive public engagement. * Individuals and families of color are consulted early and often in department's future project planning phases. |
| Determine current departmental efforts in promoting racial equity in Parks' activation projects | * Refer to Racial Equity Toolkit to implement equitable participation and outcomes for Greenways Initiative | * Develop performance indicators to assess equity in data-collection and implementation of Parks activation projects | * Baseline for racial/cultural equity in community involvement * Research report + presentation to Senior Management with recommendations for improvement | * Data collection: Aug-Nov * Data Analysis: -Dec * Data Findings Presentation - January | * Department adopts Racial Equity Toolkit and other equity building measures | |

APPENDIX E: GREENWAYS INITIATIVE SURVEY

**Seattle Parks and Recreation
Greenways Initiative Survey**



Thank you for taking this survey. Your anonymous responses will help us understand how to improve park trail and connection safety, accessibility and activation at those sites. Please answer as completely as possible.

| | Zip Code | Age | Race | Gender | Years in Seattle |
|-----------------|----------|-----|------|--------|------------------|
| Fill Out Here → | | | | | |

- How did you hear about this event?** (please check one)
 Flyers, signs, other publicity Website or blog Friend/Family Visited park by chance
 Social media Other (please describe) _____
- How often do you use City parks?** (check one)
 Often Somewhat Often Not Very Often Rarely
- What would you like to see more of at your neighborhood park?**

- How familiar are you with the Seattle Greenways Initiative?** (please check one)
 Not At All Familiar Not Very Familiar Somewhat Familiar Very Familiar
- What activities do you and/or your family do in your Local Park (and neighborhood)?**
 (please check one) Biking Walking Biking and Walking Other _____
- Please rank elements in your local park related to walking or biking that are important to you.**
 (1- most important, 9 – least; use each number once)
 Smooth pavement _____ Direct routes _____ Greenery (i.e. trees, shrubs, grass) _____
 Kiosks with local map/other information _____ Sitting areas _____ Wayfinding signs _____
 Safety Features _____ Bicycle racks _____ Other (please be specific) _____
- What type of activities would you like to see at Greenways events?**
 (1- most important, 9 – least; use each number once)
 Kid’s activities/games _____ Active demos, i.e. Yoga, Pilates, Zumba, performing arts _____
 Pedestrian and Bike Safety Information _____ Information in other languages _____
 Food vendors _____ Music _____ Other (please describe) _____
- Are there any other questions/concerns/comments you have regarding the Greenways Initiative or Seattle Parks and Recreation?**
- (Optional): Want more information on the Greenways Initiative and ways to get involved? If so, please include your name, email and/or phone contact information below. Thank you !**

APPENDIX F: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS AND FORMAT

Seattle Parks and Recreation Greenways Initiative



Defining Community: - 20 mins

- How does this community support you?

Identifying Barriers and Areas for Improvement– 55 mins

- How do you get to neighborhood parks and community centers? (5 mins)
- *[Stephanie’s spiel about safety] (20 mins)*
 - How can safety be improved on your way to parks and community centers?
 - How can safety be improved while you’re at parks and community centers?
- *[Stephanie’s spiel about health] How can parks and community centers promote a healthy and active lifestyle? (10 mins)*
- *[Facilitator’s spiel about accessibility] What makes a park and community centers feel more accessible to you? (10 mins)*
- *[Stephanie’s spiel about inclusion] What makes a park and community centers feel more welcoming to you? (10 mins)*
- *[Facilitator’s spiel about staff responsiveness maintenance issues and program ideas] If you have ideas, how do you want to communicate that? (5 mins)*

Setting Context – 15 mins

- Explain the background of what a Greenway is and the purpose it serves. The importance of parks in being safe spaces for communities and families to have access to family time and community building. (5 mins)
- What are some positives and negatives that come to mind about greenways in your community? (How would using greenways benefit you and your family? Would you walk or bike more? Have greater access to parks? Likewise, how would it hurt you and your family? What are some ways that a Greenway project might have unintended consequences in your community?) (10 mins)

Next Steps – 3 mins

- Thank you
- Talk to participants about being involved in future city discussions and if folks might want us to stay in touch for future opportunities.

APPENDIX G: GROUND RULES FOR FOCUS GROUPS

Seattle Parks and Recreation: Greenways Initiative



Thank you for participating in the focus group for the Seattle Greenways Initiative. Your anonymous responses help us understand how to improve parks safety, accessibility and use.

GROUND RULES FOR FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPATION

- Each focus group will meet for ONE 90-minute session between October and November.
- Participation in focus group is fully voluntary and based on informed consent.
- Parks staff and facilitator will make all reasonable accommodations to ensure participants can participate comfortably and fully during the session.
- Translators will be provided when language barriers may pose an issue to participation and comprehension.
- Only first names or preferred aliases will be used to maintain anonymity of participants.
- Children will be provided on site for participants who request services.
- Compensation will be provided for pre-approved participants in the form of prepaid gift cards (Visa/Mastercard)
- Parks staff will provide culturally-appropriate food and beverages for everyone present in the room: participants, facilitator, translator, Parks staff, and children. Sharing a meal together first will allow everyone involved in the focus groups to informally introduce themselves and start build rapport needed for conversations to flow organically.
- Facilitators will ensure all participants have the chance to talk. However, if any participants show reluctance to answer certain questions, facilitator will respect their wishes and allow them the opportunity to follow up in private if they wish.
- Facilitator will follow a neutral, deliberative, and non-leading format of questioning to ensure responses are not influenced or coerced.
- Facilitator will expect candor and create an atmosphere for all to safely and freely express opinions without fear of consequence.
- Participants are expected to engage in constructive and productive dialogue and feedback.
- Participants can openly challenge or disagree with each other, but should refrain from disrespectful behaviors like laughing, eye-rolling, and having separate conversations.
- Participants are expected to respect each other's privacy and not share the details of other participants' views outside the focus group.

APPENDIX H: PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM FOR FOCUS GROUPS

Seattle Parks and Recreation: Greenways Initiative



Thank you for participating in the focus group for the Seattle Greenways Initiative. Your anonymous responses help us understand how to improve parks safety, accessibility and use.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM

Please read the following paragraphs and, if you are in agreement, sign where indicated.

I understand the purpose and scope of the Greenways Initiative and my participation in focus groups are 100% voluntary.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

I consent to being audiotaped and/or videotaped during my session, so that recordings can be used to aid the research process.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

I consent to the excerpts from these recordings, or descriptions of them, being used by the Seattle Parks and Recreation staff for the purposes of supervision and research. I understand that the Seattle Parks and Recreation staff will edit out as much identifying information as possible from these recordings or descriptions of the recordings to ensure confidentiality of all participants.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

For more information, please contact greenways@seattle.gov

APPENDIX I: CHILD CONSENT FORM FOR FOCUS GROUPS

Seattle Parks and Recreation: Greenways Initiative



Thank you for allowing your child to participate in the focus group for the Seattle Greenways Initiative. Your child's anonymous responses will help us understand how to improve parks safety, accessibility and use for teens.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPATION CHILD CONSENT FORM

Please read the following paragraphs and, if you are in agreement, sign where indicated.

I understand the purpose and scope of the Greenways Initiative and my child's participation in focus groups are 100% voluntary.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

I consent to my child being audiotaped and/or videotaped (please circle audiotaped if uncomfortable with videotaping but ok with audiotaping) during my session, so that recordings can be used to aid the research process.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

I consent to the excerpts from these recordings, or descriptions of them, being used by the Seattle Parks and Recreation staff for the purposes of supervision and research. I understand that the Seattle Parks and Recreation staff will edit out as much identifying information as possible from these recordings or descriptions of the recordings to ensure confidentiality of all participants.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

For more information, please contact greenways@seattle.gov