

## STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN PUBLIC MEETING PHASE 1

### Arboretum: December 4, 2007

Total Participants: 9 Public, 4 Parks and Recreation Staff

#### Major Themes

Comments were broadly focused around building trust between Parks and Recreation and the community, communication, marketing/public information, access to facilities, programs, and parks. People seemed to be supportive of Parks and Recreation and valued the environmental stewardship, programs, and activities offered. Many felt that Parks and Recreation needed additional resources to do its work and expressed support for additional funding, including support for potential future levies, to preserve open space.

### 1. What could Parks and Recreation improve?

#### *Public Engagement*

- Need more outreach, in addition to mailings, flyers and website, to community neighbors of specific parks
- Need more transparency around Parks and Recreation projects, need better explanations regarding resource allocations within Parks and Recreation
- Send outreach materials to community clubs
- Parks and Recreation needs to be better at marketing itself and its assets
- Utilize technology to do better outreach
- Create driving tour maps of parks in the City
- Do a better job at telling the Parks and Recreation story
- Get a byline or a column, such as Parks and Recreation questions and answers, to let the public know what's happening at Parks and Recreation, upcoming meetings/events
- Post press releases on the Parks and Recreation web site

#### *Maintenance*

- Need to increase funding for maintenance
- More maintenance for parks

#### *Environment and Green Practices*

- Need solar panels at all community centers to save money and support green practices
- More biodiversity in parks and continual planting so that all trees are not the same age
- Do more ecological work, such as shoreline restoration
- Use more Green Building standards
- Need more local parks and natural areas

## 2. What does Parks and Recreation do well?

### *Programs*

- The O2/Trek program is a great program
- Senior Programs are impressive and more are needed because there are more and more seniors; Parks and Recreation should offer senior programs weekday mornings
- ‘Shakespeare in the Park’ is a good program, Parks and Recreation should expand it and do more theater and music programs in parks
- Community centers do a good job with youth programming, sports, etc.

### *Parks and Facilities*

- Good job improving shoreline habitat
- Olmsted and larger parks are appreciated
- Community parks are important

### *Maintenance*

- Maintenance crews are responsive to storm damage issues
- Parks gardeners are an excellent resource to the community and Parks and Recreation volunteers
- Environmental stewardship is appreciated

## 3. What are the issues and challenges that Parks and Recreation will face in the next five years?

### *Financial*

- Lack of revenue for Parks and Recreation
- Parks and Recreation is not as efficient in utilizing funds as it could be
- The high cost of maintenance
- Lack of budget transparency the public should see budget details and data on expenses
- High overhead costs
- Escalating costs to acquire property
- Ability to maintain assets and infrastructure

### *Programs and Services*

- Programs were free in past, higher fees are driving people away from Parks and Recreation programs and services
- Increasing use fees could cut out poorer populations from being able to access programs and services
- Lack of programs and services for immigrant and non-English speaking communities, Parks and Recreation needs the flexibility to change and provide services that reflect changing demographics

### *Public Engagement*

- Lack of mechanism for continuous feedback
- Community service is important
- Parks and Recreation needs to repair its tattered relations with community and rebuild public trust
- Lack of process for public feedback and input to ensure continued support of Parks and Recreation

#### **4. What are the emerging trends that will drive how Parks and Recreation does business over the next five years?**

##### ***Parks and Facilities***

- New use fees, Parks and Recreation should charge a user fee for dog parks and bike trails
- It would be better to pay higher taxes than nitpick about fees
- Better partnership with Seattle Public Schools – greater access to SPS facilities, fields, etc for public use and parks use
- No overall reduction of green space in the Parks and Recreation system
- School properties that are for sale or in development should be designated for hardscape uses, such as skateparks, rather than to develop park land
- Utilize public buildings 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- The skatepark plan needs to be implemented

##### ***Public Engagement***

- Improve the web site, it is not user friendly and it is difficult to navigate

#### **5. What is your vision for Parks and Recreation?**

##### ***Public Engagement***

- Youth and parents are not represented in meeting groups, most attendees are older and have higher incomes
- Better engagement of young mothers in parks
- Post Parks and Recreation press releases on website
- Improve communication to and from the public
- Create public recognition of and respect for the value of Parks and Recreation
- People being able to easily and efficiently access information about Parks and Recreation, including history, programs and volunteering information

##### ***Organization***

- Parks and Recreation should collect data and utilize it to inform program and facility decisions
- Incorporate think globally and act locally ideals around community, environment, and health issues
- There needs to be transparency around how Parks and Recreation spends and manages resources
- Parks and Recreation needs to balance generating revenue with equity and access for the public

##### ***Programs and Services***

- Need indoor play areas for toddlers
- Keep swimming free for kids
- More Health programs, Parks and Recreation should contribute significantly to preventing obesity and other preventable disease

##### ***Parks and Facilities***

- Recognize the Olmsted Legacy; provide driving tour maps, historic markers, before and after photos, information about historic figures, and other educational and historical information in each park; have a park week to celebrate Olmsted
- Ensure the public respect parks by 2017 through education programs and an anti-litter campaign

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- Keep parks and facilities free for kids
- By 2017, develop new parks and keep the old ones looking great
- Have beautiful, functioning restrooms
- More effective utilization of facilities to cope with increased demand for programs and facilities
- Bathrooms open all year round
- Maintain parks and facilities to encourage passive recreation
- Pocket parks are more important now with increased population and density
- Gardens are more necessary in order to access to fresh locally grown produce, Parks and Recreation should go back to WWII Victory Gardens
- Parks should stay free

### *Finances*

- Hire a marketing firm to promote raising taxes for more Parks and Recreation revenue
- Use TV commercials and other information strategies to increase public awareness of Parks and Recreation revenue needs
- Parks and Recreation needs another levy

### *Environment and Green Practices*

- Environmental concerns are growing, take advantage of heightened public awareness to do more for the environment
- Explain the environmental costs of parks and facilities
- Improve the City's environment through planting more trees, institute policies to counteract global warming

### *Partnerships*

- More intentional partners to leverage and protect resources

## **6. Other Comments on Specific Projects**

- Need a Strategic Action Plan meeting in the Leschi, Madrona, Mt. Baker area, potentially at the Mt. Baker Community Building
- Requested that Tim Gallagher attend a Madison Park Community Council meeting
- Suggested distributing the Strategic Action Plan survey through the Seattle Public Schools
- Need more security for the Arboretum, need to address the thefts of collections; there is no security on the weekends
- Fix the ADA/Men's shower at Medgar Evers Pool and fix lockers
- Repair Stan Sayers Boat Launches
- The 520 work is an imminent threat to Arboretum
- Seattle residents can't sign up for programs at Rowing and Sailing because Mercer Island residents are taking up too many spaces