

## STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN PUBLIC MEETING PHASE 1

### Discovery Park Environmental Learning Center: December 6, 2007

Total Participants: 28 Public, 5 Parks and Recreation Staff

#### Major Themes

Participants repeatedly expressed concerns about funding. They felt that Parks and Recreation is undefended but should not use commercial sponsorship or privatization to increase its budget. People also spoke about the need for better environmental practices including working more with the Green Seattle Partnership, green maintenance practices and restoring native forests and habitat throughout the parks system. The difficulty with public transportation to and from parks and facilities was also discussed.

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

##### *Finances*

- Adequate budget for Parks
- No more unfunded parks
- Do not use commercial interests for funding
- More funding for children's scholarships
- Fully fund parks restoration and Green Seattle Partnership
- More budget

##### *Parks and Facilities*

- New Buildings LEED certified
- More swimming pools
- Natural areas need more definition
  - Need to demand more natural areas
  - Need to highlight natural areas in terms of operation
  - Need to reflect in business plan
- Animal control
- More support for Green Seattle Partnership
- Reclaim street ends
- Native forest in leased parklands
- More community centers
- Manage as watershed groups
- Abide by master plans and management plans

##### *Staff and Security*

- Larger Parks attract negative behavior, need a Ranger to handle situations
- Handling the problems that occur after dark
- More staff in environmental learning centers
- Need park rangers in natural area parks

- Need a watershed manager
- More enforcement of rules in the park
- Public safety
- Increase staffing proportionately and appropriately

### ***Public Engagement***

- Marketing
- Promote parks we have and their functions (national, regional)
- More oversight of special interest groups (COLA)
- Publicize parks better
- Highlight natural areas as part of the parks system
- Diversify advisory council membership and customers

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

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

- Community Center Programs
- Docent programs and other opportunities for volunteerism (x2)
- P-Patches (x2)
- Sports and athletics
- Summer programs
- Nurtures “Friends of” groups (x2)
- Scholarships, evening programs (x2)
- Programming – environmental learning center
- Dedicated staff
- Seattle Park Foundation
- Parks does a tremendous number of functions that are under funded
- Dedicated staff that are spread thin

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

- Efforts to acquire park land
- Good Job of incorporating natural areas into park landscaping
- Environmental learning center
- Started the Green Seattle Partnership
- Fabulous facilities
- Efforts to acquire new park land

### ***Public Engagement***

- Associated Recreation Council partnership (x2)
- Involving the public in process
- Effective Leadership

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

#### ***Finances***

- Taxes may not be sufficient to cover park needs
- The end of the Pro Parks Levy
- Fees to use parks
- Lack of funding
- Fiscal responsibility – Parks Department
- Loss of budget dollars which are already scarce

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

- Over use and unlawful use by dog owners, dogs off-leash, user conflicts
- Privatization of parks (private sale of Officers' Row in Discovery Park)
- Planting schemes that include invasive plants
- Rainfall lost in storm drains
- Environmental damage (storm damage to trees, trails, etc.)
- Lack of species diversity
- Loss of forest canopy
- Population increase will increase demands on parks and open space
- Lack of leadership stymies innovation, outsourcing to partners is a problem
- Feral cats
- Development
- Large citywide parks need master plans
- Excess use, parks are "loved" to death
- Ratio of open space to population too small
- Open space not equally distributed
- Scofflaws
- Loss of open space
- Special interests in parks

#### ***Transportation and Parking***

- Inadequate bus service
- Demand for parking, should encourage transit
- Poured parking lots
- Parking Meters

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

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

- Stop loss of open space and other uses
- Develop more unstructured play space
- Make safer parks

- Preserve current green spaces

### ***Maintenance***

- Integration of work between departments (drainage management)
- Eliminate road runs on the streets
- Ivy Pulls

### ***Public Engagement***

- Increased work with “Friends of” groups
- Improved work with Schools to bring children into the parks
- Include trails and open space on the Parks Guide

### ***Finances***

- Fees on development to fund more parks and open space
- Add meters to play sports
- Identify new funding sources
- Fees on development create investment in environmental improvements to parks

### ***Green Practices/Environmental Education***

- Increasing environmental awareness for the population
- Environmental education
- More education opportunities
- Sustainable forest management
- Kids should have access to more learning opportunities about bio-diversity
- Environmental threats could give rise to more opportunities

### ***Programs and Staff***

- Hire more staff with wildlife habitat management experience and education
- “No child left inside” could provide more environmental learning and stewardship opportunities
- Hire people with backgrounds in restoration and wildlife habitats
- Work with more school children

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

### ***Green Practices and Transportation***

- Paul Allen starts bicycling
- People take mass transit to parks
- Use flex vans to take people to parks
- Parks maintenance methodology should be environmentally friendly

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

- Improve conifer number and density in the parks
- Manage to assume old growth characteristics
- Park playgrounds within easy walking distance of all residents
- Improved stewardship to foster habitat diversity
- Parks used in a lawful way by all public
- No port-a-potties in the parks

## SEATTLE PARKS AND RECREATION STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

- Open space increases as population increases
- Off-Leash areas in all neighborhoods
- Manage Seattle Parks inventory as a part of a connected ecosystem
- Finish the Olmsted plan
- Look at European models for creative use of space
- Underserved communities have more parks near them and they are used
- Trails have minimum intrusion into habitat to maintain habitat
- Better communication between Parks units
- Protect the “greenness” of Seattle Parks
- Parks used in a lawful way
- Policies that will increase open spaces as population and density increases
- Park playgrounds, green areas and community centers within walking distance of all homes
- Improved stewardship to natural areas

### ***Partnerships***

- Include Fish and Wildlife in parks planning
- Seattle Parks and Seattle Department of Transportation work together to improve tree canopy cover in the city
- Work with University of Washington restoration ecology faculty

### ***Public Engagement***

- Blue ribbon citizens’ panel to keep Parks in line with the vision
- Protect open space for the future
- Save historic buildings in parks
- Seattle parks becomes the national leader for urban public land stewardship, including staff, budget, and management

### ***Finances***

- No privatization in parks
- Dedicated and reliable budget as population increases

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

- Integrate Fort Lawton into Discovery Park
- Master plan for Discovery Park should be supported and abided by
- Discovery Park needs a building Manager
- New park development at Ella Bailey, Peak Park, and others
- In Discovery Park the master plan is bypassed
- Creation of healthy forest at Discovery Park
- Coho in Kiwanis Ravine
- Use the chapel for a public gathering space in Discovery Park
- Mission statement should include 50% park spaces, 25% park acreage, and 100% nature day camp at Discovery Park
- Work with Port of Seattle on expansion of Smith Cove