

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN PUBLIC MEETING PHASE 1

Jefferson Community Center: December 1, 2007

Total Participants: 19 Public, 4 Parks and Recreation Staff

Major Themes

Participants wanted Parks and Recreation to have a presence in parks and differentiate neighborhood parks from regional parks. They also wanted more partnerships with other City Departments to create walking areas connecting parks and for Parks and Recreation to pay more attention to south end parks. Many participants also discussed protection of park views and enforcement of park property rights and other rules and regulations.

1. What could Parks and Recreation improve?

Public Engagement

- Make people understand how Parks and Recreation works
- Funding is a mystery
- Use surveys to understand facility and parks uses
- Use the information we have already gathered instead of re-inventing the wheel
- Less process and more action
- Parks need more Parks and Recreation presence in neighborhoods
- Parks needs to build on information and plans already generated before starting new plans (no matter how long ago they were done)
- Need to work with new people who move into a neighborhood and want something new in the park
- Increase the sense of community with park facilities and users
- Encourage walking in the parks – take the lead!

Programs and Services

- Improve access to parks via buses and walking
- Think about doing athletic games

Parks and Facilities

- Parks code needs to be enforced particularly regarding wild life (specifically off leash dogs allowed to run wild in natural areas)
- Protect wildlife from domestic animals on the loose; leash laws are important to enforce
- Improve quality of fields (sand not a good surface)
- Focus on region more ad hoc/joint use of facilities
- Regional facilities in addition to local/neighborhood parks
- The Georgetown play area is too far away from the houses around the park

Play Fields

- Look at realities of space limits for field/team uses. Presently too much precious park land spent on fields

- Do some creative thinking regarding field use and need alternatives
- Affordable fields; create more availability for practice
- Use currently lit field areas and better use these field spaces instead of lighting all fields
- When planning fields, leave open areas for more casual multi-purpose uses; be more Olmstedian in vision
- Artificial turf—how recycle when replace? Artificial turf is not habitat like dirt and grass is habitat for low end of the food chain—how do we get that capacity back using artificial turf fields?
- Grass is expensive to maintain; artificial turf doesn't have a dual use
- Synthetic fields - make more efficient and safe
- Ecology of synthetic turf fields is in question

Green Practices

- Lead the way in how to preserve resources; more efficient watering
- Ensure energy being used efficiently (particularly lighting and electrical)
- User-based lighting, especially at the driving range
- THINK MORE CREATIVELY
- Opportunity to look at grass-based play and recreation areas

Partnerships

- Need to work with other Departments to coordinate services
- Act more like One City
- Parks could work better with Department of Neighborhoods, particularly with P-patches/community gardens
- Work with Seattle Department of Transportation to make connections between parks better for walking and biking
- Parks and Recreation and Seattle Schools need to work together

2. What does Parks and Recreation do well?

Public Engagement

- Good outreach to diverse communities

Programs and Services

- Beginning to look at larger/nearby community centers to coordinate classes and uses
- Classes have all ages, income levels, educational levels, etc.

Parks and Facilities

- Have a diverse set of facilities and parks and natural areas
- Raft Hollingsworth is an asset to Parks

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

Green Practices

- Artificial turf (use of recycled rubber – EPA issue)
- Dumping and cleanup of illegal dumping

Public Engagement

- Changing demographics, staying relevant to users
- Seattle taking on role of being the promoter of regional facilities
- Loss of a shared vision with all parks users and politicians
- Parks outreach materials should include south end parks and south end references; all promotional materials focus on the north end amenities

Finances

- User fees don't reflect Seattleites vs. outside users, such as at golf
- Maintenance funds are dwindling as park's system grows
- Zero based budgeting ***

Parks and Facilities

- Losing views throughout the City and need to preserve especially in parks
- How to save views when view is over a lighted field (night views and sunset views)
- Non-park use of park spaces
- Demarcation of park boundaries and enforcement of illegal cutting of trees; enforcement of park areas for open spaces; get rid of encroachments
- Acquisition – lost opportunities; need to stay vigilant so can pounce when land is available
- Look ahead at acquisition potential and do deals; partner up
- Privatization of public parks (like allowing One Reel to take over Gas Works Park) should be outlawed
- Inequitable distribution of park areas/emphasis on north end
- There is only 1 south end pool

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

Programs and Services

- Concessions at games (“food and drink) and on fields
- Improve quality of food in parks

Public Engagement

- Use Internet for advertising and marketing of parks, facilities and programs
- Improve public involvements process; Parks employees don't necessarily facilitate well; consider using professionals only
- Parks personnel should create and help coordinate a feeling of community in the community

Parks and Facilities

- Parking – think about less
- Parks are places in urban environment to breathe, relax, and be in nature
- Parks and recreation work in tandem; focus should be balance more creative in design (green roofs, etc.) are all concentrated in the north end; they need to go into the south end as well
- Find new park opportunities
- Incorporate sustainability of all Community Improvement Plan projects and
- More pocket parks

- Use opportunities such as reservoir covering to combat global warming

5. What is your vision for Parks and Recreation?

Parks and Facilities

- General and specific uses of parks should co-exist
- Parks personnel should create and help coordinate a feeling of community in the community
- Parks are places in urban environment to breathe, relax, and be in nature
- Parks and recreation work in tandem; focus should be balanced
- Ensure diverse variety of parks in each neighborhood (section)
- Parks needs to be a focal point in City's priorities.
- Parks are the environmental lung of the city

Green Practices

- Parks should model sustainability at every level: watering to growing to uses to programming

Public Engagement

- Educate leaders in the importance of parks and speak as advocates of parks
- Parks needs stronger role in coordinating with other departments
- Healthy populations = healthy city