

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN PUBLIC MEETING PHASE 1

Queen Anne Community Center: December 5, 2007

Total Participants: 24 Public, 3 Parks and Recreation Staff

Major Themes

The primary themes were maintenance, both for facilities and natural areas, and better communication. There was also a strong interest in a greater focus on neighborhood parks, and a better ability to respond to the changing needs and demands for alternative park uses. Those in attendance included spokesperson for dogs off leash, skateboarders, community council and an advisory council.

1. What could Parks and Recreation improve?

Public Engagement

- Always adhere to established policies and procedures (public involvement process) without any shortcuts
- All public meetings need formal record with recording and transcript (i.e. ball field and lighting projects)
- Independent facilitators needed for public meetings; use mediation skills to resolve questions
- Professional community relations people needed for capital projects
- Set a time limit for speakers at public meetings
- Any changes planned? Let the public know
- Timely communication
- Better communication/notification about this meeting
- Responsiveness to written communication; expect timely reply
- Change phone book (Dex) listing to simplify process of reporting concerns or questions
- Better awareness of projects/changes

Parks and Facilities

- Co-habitation of park spaces; fit skateboards or other active uses into current parks or new ones
- Increased monitoring of dogs off leash is needed
- Off leash areas has been a struggle to implement; parks leadership is needed
- Need more pools with multiple bodies of water (multi temperatures)
- Need more swimming pools; multi-use pools needed; overcrowding is a concern
- Need local parks within walking distance, even small spaces help
- Need more pea patches within parks

Maintenance

- Slow grounds maintenance to remove leaves. Need improved communication about schedule for leaf pickup along boulevards; possibly use the web site or establish regular schedule that citizens can be prepared for
- Lower Kinnear maintenance is inconsistent; investment is needed. Transparency of issues is lacking
- Turn lights off on ball fields.

- Community input needed to identify maintenance needs
- Need proactive management of natural areas (greenbelts, streams, wet lands)
- Commitment to Heritage Trees
- Concern about tree preservation; not happy that when a large tree is removed a small one is added.
- Need skilled maintenance personnel to weed and prune

Programs and Services

- Slow process for volunteer registration and other paperwork
- No fees for kids programs
- Programs for ages 25 to 50 are needed

Finances

- Concern about ending of the ProParks Levy
- Not enough money devote to maintaining parks
- Not enough money to upgrade playgrounds

Safety and Security

- Concern about homeless issue (encampments) consistency and communication.
- Increase use of park ranger program

Partnerships

- Need more partnerships

2. What does Parks and Recreation do well?

Parks and Facilities

- Open space acquisitions
- Building ball fields; better than SPS
- Off leash transformation at 13 sites
- Quality construction projects (design, input, etc)
- Bayview Kinnear has great play equipment
- Ballard Commons turned out great
- Baby room at QACC
- Drop-in space for older adults at QACC
- Responsive to skateboard lobby groups

Programs and Services

- Life Long Recreation: affordable, enjoyable, active, good catalog of choices for all age programming
- QA pool and CC offer programs for all ages; shared time; tiny tots to older adults

Public Engagement

- Improve public involvement since 1998

Maintenance

- Response to tree concern; professional care given to horse chestnut tree

Staff

- Volunteer coordinators are supportive

- Value of a lead parks staff person on issues

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

Parks and Facilities

- Loss of open space
- Aging facilities with high costs for replacement (i.e. pools)
- Aging trees reaching end of lifecycle

Population Growth

- Population increase
- Growth in population is coming
- Managing growth in city

Parks and Recreation as a City Department

- Lack of leadership for vision in Parks and Recreation
- Political threat: recognize differences rather than “cookie cutter” response from management
- Competition with other City demands of roads, infrastructure, etc: Need broad vision

Environment

- Climate change: reduce our carbon footprint

Maintenance

- Steep slope stability

Finances

- Voters saying no to more taxes
- Sunset of ProParks levy: need dollars for better maintenance
- Privatization

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

Parks and Facilities

- Acquire property downtown
- Lower Kinneer Parks – reclaim from homeless; enjoy the view

Programs and Services

- Hold the line to protect childhood... encourage unstructured play

Partnerships

- Partnerships with groups to increase efficiencies

Public Engagement

- Work with community groups/foster
- Proactive effort to involve community councils
- Community center outreach to improve diversity; spread throughout the system
- Increased community center visibility to citizens

Finances

- There is a levy need to fund park needs

Maintenance

- Proactive management of green spaces. Replacement of invasives with food production

5. What is your vision for Parks and Recreation?

Programs and Services

- Community Center and Pool reach wider more diverse population
- Value environmental programs, ELC, education, resource management, and habitat restoration
- Nature walks with naturalists

Parks and Facilities

- More small neighborhood parks with food gardens
- Large park spaces; access to services
- More drop in outdoor spaces (fields, games spaces, play, etc)
- Access to green spaces
- More off leash dog areas
- More pools; redevelopment to expand pool uses
- Multi-use facilities

Public Engagement

- Better communication
- Parks belongs to everyone
- People feeling ownership of parks
- Respect for the opinions of neighbors
- Work on compromise solutions with the community
- Able to accommodate everyone's needs
- Follow policies and procedures
- Transparency
- Effective web site
- Able to expand system to meet changing needs

Maintenance

- Better maintenance
- Tree canopy replacement

Safety and Security

- Security lighting

6. Other Comments on Specific Projects

- North Bay project (POS) needs a lit playfield
- Smith Cove transformation (Olmsted, pool, fields, rental space, view, no swap, acquire west yard)
- Repair broken light pole at Queen Anne Pool