

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN PUBLIC MEETING PHASE 1

Ravenna-Eckstein Community Center: November 27, 2007

Total Participants: 15 Public, 5 Parks and Recreation Staff

Major Themes

The majority of comments were about needing pools in north Seattle. Many people also expressed wanting Parks and Recreation to prioritize creating more passive parks for enjoying nature and walking.

1. What could Parks and Recreation improve?

Parks and Facilities

- Need more general use, passive, unstructured parks for people who enjoy birding and observing nature
- Need more small pocket parks within walking distance of home, there should be one within one mile or a 5 minute walk of every home
- Parks and facilities need more and better parking
- Need to define and classify regional versus local parks for improved programming and marketing
- Need a new pool in north Seattle
- Need more dog off-leash areas
- Improve enforcement of non-off-leash areas
- Need more “natural setting” parks
- The Joint Athletic Fields Development Plan needs re-writing; there is a problem with the current list of fields slated for conversion
- Need a better balance between structured and unstructured parks

Maintenance

- Need more and better tree maintenance
- Improve policies on how to choose which trees to remove, include citizen input
- Need more stream day lighting projects
- Remove all invasive species

Green Practices

- Parks and Recreation needs to pay more attention to the environmental affects of policies and procedures

Programs and Services

- Need more teen training programs, particularly lifeguard training programs

2. What does Parks and Recreation do well?

Staff

- Staff that the public interacts with are well liked and respect the staff

Public Engagement

- Parks and Recreation as a whole and individual staff members are available to respond to and talk with the public.
- Public forums, like the Strategic Business Plan public meetings, and the dialogue that ensues from them are good
- Staff and Parks and Recreation in general listen well

Programs and Services

- Programming at the community centers is good

Parks and Facilities

- Parks and Recreation manages a variety of parks well
- Community center playrooms are nice
- Indoor pools are good
- The richness of the Seattle Parks and Recreation system is appreciated
- Public gardens, like the Japanese garden and Kubota garden, are beautiful

Partnerships

- Joint use agreement with the Seattle Public School District is appreciated
- Parks and Recreation works well with community groups to rehabilitate and improve parks

Maintenance

- Pools and parks are well maintained

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

Changing City

- Balancing the quantity of parks with urban density
- Parks and Recreation needs to be responsive to current and future demographic trends

Finances

- Need funding for open space acquisitions and maintenance
- Need funding to acquire new properties and maintain public green spaces
- Need strategy to obtain funding, should look at grant availability from Washington Recreation and Conservation Office

Programs and Services

- Not every program and services needs to pay for itself

Parks and Facilities

- To increase cost-effectiveness of parks, Parks and Recreation should look more at the costs and benefits of the types of parks in the system; sports field cost more to maintain than open spaces and Parks and Recreation should not subsidize sports to the exclusion of other uses
- Need a greater focus on safety in parks, especially as it pertains to children
- Need more dog-off leash parks as there are more dogs than children in Seattle
- Need better enforcement to make owners be more responsible about keeping their dogs on a leash

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

Parks and Facilities

- There will be a greater appreciation for trails and beaches, more loop trails will be needed
- Will need more picnic tables and more seating
- Parks and Recreation will become more aware of City hillsides, including use, maintenance and slope stability
- Parks and Recreation will have created and recreated more opportunities for “nature” in parks
- There will be more opportunities for unstructured play outdoors, like playing in the woods
- There will be some “adventure” playgrounds
- Natural areas will be restored by young people working and volunteering.
- There will be more wading pools
- People will arrive at parks on public transportation that goes specifically to and from major parks
- Wetlands will recover and return
- More cultural activities, such as plays and concerts, will be hosted in parks

Partnerships

- There will be more partnerships to finance parks either through privatization or other options
- There will be better joint use agreements with commercial spaces.

Programs and Services

- There will be more cost recovery from sports organizations.
- There will be more staffed group activities.
- More swimming classes will be offered to ESL kids

5. What is your vision for Parks and Recreation?

- No comments

6. Other Comments on Specific Projects

- There should be an outdoor pool at Magnuson Park
- Comments about removal of a large willow tree at Dahl Playfield and an old maple tree at Volunteer Park
- Remove invasive species on the Burke-Gilman Trail, use neighbors as volunteers to do this