

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN PUBLIC MEETING PHASE 1

Note: Due to low turn-out at the first South Park Community Center Strategic Action Plan Meeting, a second meeting was held. The public input below is organized by the first meeting and then the second in order to capture all of the input received at both meetings.

South Park Community Center: November 27, 2007

Total Participants: 12 Public, 5 Parks and Recreation Staff

Major Themes

Many people commented on the need to keep parks from being commercialized or privatized. Attendees expressed interest in more, free, programming for youth and special populations. Participants commented that Parks and Recreation needed to maintain buildings and infrastructure adequately. Finally, they felt that more staff should be hired from the neighborhoods in which they work.

1. What could Parks and Recreation improve?

Public Engagement

- Do not let planners pre-ordain community and public processes
- Volunteers should be celebrated more
- Involve the more of the community, reach out beyond special interest groups to solicit input
- Train community members to organize their own communities

Parks and Facilities

- Bike trails need to link up better to SDOT connections

Programs and Services

- The south end of the City needs more programs for special populations e.g., parent respite nights
- Programs do not seem to reflect community demographics
- Fees should be eliminated for youth programs and classes
- Seniors fees are too high, implement a sliding scale of fees for seniors

Maintenance

- Asset maintenance is inadequate for amount of Parks and Recreation property due Pro Parks Levy acquisitions

Staff

- Parks and Recreation should hire for skill sets needed
- Parks and Recreation should hire from the neighborhood
- Make more training money available so staff can help youth in programs

Partnerships

- Reach out to local church and school communities

- Break down organizational barriers to cooperation between YMCA's, Boy & Girl's Clubs, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, churches, and schools, etc.

Organization

- Parks and Recreation needs to narrow its mission
- Parks and Recreation should focus on serving the community instead of on collecting fees

2. What does Parks and Recreation do well?

Staff

- Parks and Recreation has a diverse work force and a great staff

Programs and Services

- The special populations programs are great, even with minimal funding

Parks and Facilities

- Large number, proximity and huge range of parks is good

Public Engagement

- Good involvement of youth in decisions about programming

3. What are the threats facing Parks and Recreation?

Finances

- There is not enough funding to maintain the new assets acquired by the Pro Parks Levy
- Funding levels are inadequate for programming for a diverse population
- Given the shrinking tax base, Parks and Recreation will have to struggle to sustain parks, subsidize programs and keep-up with maintenance
- Inadequate maintenance funding for infrastructure, such as painting, plumbing, and cleaning

Partnerships

- No corporate sponsorships, no signs that say, "Brought to you by Safeco" in any parks

Youth and Teens

- Gang activity
- Getting kids into a community center when they'd rather play XBOX or watch TV at home
- High drop out rate for urban students

4. What are the opportunities for Parks and Recreation?

- Opportunities to partner with police, schools, churches, and retired mentors
- Changing demographics, there are fewer kids and a more affluent population of singles

5. What is your vision for Parks and Recreation?

Staff

- Parks and Recreation should hire local neighborhood people to staff community centers and programs

Programs and Services

- Parks and Recreation should be creating opportunities for youth mentoring and training
- Develop best practices for programming system-wide, not just in individual community centers
- Become a social service provider for urban youth
- Programs should be free or affordable to everyone who wants them, no child should be refused a ballet class due to poverty or be humiliated because they are asking for something they know their parents can't afford

Partnerships

- Parks and Recreation should partner with parents, students and Seattle Public Schools to help youth
- Partner with seniors

Maintenance

- Parks that are well maintained, cared for, and clean

Public Engagement

- More community ownership of parks and facilities with Parks and Recreation staff leading the way for a village concept of parks with decision making from the bottom up
- A bottom up community driven Parks and Recreation Department
- A leader in community activism

Parks and Facilities

- Parks with lots of positive activities like concerts, dancing, artists, musicians and jugglers

South Park Community Center: January 5, 2008

Total Participants: 36 Public

Major Themes

Participants expressed the need for better marketing, advertising and information about parks, programs, and facilities. More programs that helped the community become fit and healthy were requested, including more pool programs.

1. What could Parks and Recreation improve?

Parks and Facilities

- Increase/improve access to fields, especially baseball fields
- Prioritize local community use of fields
- Need more outdoor basketball courts
- Need more weight rooms
- Build carousels in parks
- Host concerts and arts events in parks
- Need more bike trails
- Need more signs indicating the age children must be to use playgrounds
- Connect existing bike trails with each other
- Provide food to generate revenue

Programs and Services

- Need more handicapped programs
- Need more pool programs
- Need a course on running
- Need more activities for people with arthritis
- Increase physical fitness activities
- Provide free aerobics classes and weight rooms
- Offer lecture series
- Offer more canine related activities
- Look at proximity of a community center to the community when determining whether to rent rooms/facilities for events that will include serving alcohol

Partnerships

- Collaborate with local organizations to increase safety

Public Engagement

- Provide more opportunity to communicate about changes
- Put more photos of Parks and Recreation on the City website
- Work to create more long term sustainable relationships with the community, when staff change make sure this relationship is communicated and handled with care
- Need better marketing

- Need better outreach to the community

Maintenance

- Improve floors
- Improve golf courses
- Improve club houses
- Improve care of bike trails

2. What does Parks and Recreation do well?

Programs and Services

- Good job providing activities for youth and engaging them in recreational opportunities, including computer labs
- Good focus on completing homework
- Commitment to teens, especially with Late Night program
- Summer programs are good
- Making space available to community groups
- Offering English as a second language classes, computer lab, and other opportunities
- Kids feel safe which supports the entire community

Staff

- Staff members are great, parents trust staff members and feel like they are a second family
- Staff is responsive to needs of the community, they make sure to get information to the public in different languages and requests are attended to immediately

Public Engagement

- Community centers do a good job building relationships, they are where minorities communicate and connect

Partnerships

- Coordinate well with Seattle Police Department

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

Finances

- The end of the Pro Parks Levy is a problem

Public Engagement

- It is challenging to work with Parks and Recreation on projects
- Communicating changes and issues prior to the changes occurring
- Better community engagement
- Marketing to keep programs sustainable
- Increasing community advocates

Staff

- Staff retention, especially given staff salaries

Environment

- Being mindful of environmental issues

Programs and Services

- Being able to serve the community and provide free and low cost programs
- Cutting programs at Community Learning Centers from 5 days to 2 days

Access

- Public transportation in south King County

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

Partnerships

- Work with community health centers and other recreation centers to leverage resources
- Partnering with other organizations
- Strengthen partnerships
- Partner with boxing gyms
- Leverage corporations, like Boeing and Microsoft, to give back to the community

Parks and Facilities

- Creating culturally sensitive places just to sit and talk
- Acquire digital community reader boards

Public Engagement

- Technical support for online bulletin boards
- Community center My Space Pages
- Better website and brochure translation
- Parks and Recreation should make outreach a primary responsibility and take an active role in outreach
- Encourage word of mouth marketing
- Inform the community about how to get involved in lobbying the City for what they need

Programs and Services

- Host summer concerts with different cultural and community groups, invite guest artists
- Offer enrichment classes 7 days a week
- Offer Late Night teen program on Saturdays
- Market the opportunities in different languages. Diverse boards and action teams
- Support arts programming

5. What is your vision for Parks and Recreation?

Programs and Services

- Programs that support active living for everyone
- Every community center offering programming that reflects the local community

Parks and Facilities

- Sustainable spaces

Public Engagement

- Parks and Recreation be a local draw for visitors and tourists
- Instill that the parks belong to the people

6. Comments on Specific Projects Unrelated to the SBP

- Carmen is well respected and loved