

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN PUBLIC MEETING PHASE 1

Southwest Community Center: November 28, 2007

Total Participants: 34 Public, 4 Parks and Recreation Staff

Major Themes

Programs and Services: Comments included wanting expanded hours and days, especially weekends, of operation for community centers and pools.

Finances: People expressed general concerns current funding, funding in the future and ongoing affordability of programs. They also worried that programs and maintenance made possible by the Pro Parks Levy, such as Learn to Swim and Teen programs would not be continued

Public Engagement: Participants expressed the need for better marketing, advertising and information about parks, programs and facilities. The need for increased diversity in participants through reaching out and making everyone feel welcome at Community Centers and other facilities and increasing staff diversity was commented on. They also discussed Park and Recreation lack of outreach to the community especially around the Strategic Action Plan. People felt the time frame to publicize the meetings and accommodate different language needs was too short. They also commented that Parks and Recreation needs to do a better job of including diverse communities in the Strategic Plan public input process. There was general appreciation of good staff, programs and facilities and web site.

1. What could Parks and Recreation improve?

Programs and Services

- Expand programs for adults, improve the appropriateness of the instructors

Parks and Facilities

- Need more athletic fields and an increase in the variety of sports they support
- Open longer hours
- Open more days and weekends
- Increase number and hours of lap swim offering
- Need more parks
- Need more off leash areas/
- Need more drinking fountains
- Need better enforcement of off-leash areas
- Need more park rangers
- Increase presence of garbage cans to keep parks cleaner

Maintenance

- Hold staff accountable for completing more maintenance

Public Engagement

- Increase advertising and marketing of facilities

- Have a book that lists Parks and Recreation resources
- Target different demographic groups
- Give more advanced and widespread notice about public meeting
- Offer materials and translation services for other languages at public meetings

Staff

- Staff move around too much
- Staff, including senior staff, should reflect diverse community

2. What does Parks and Recreation do well?

Public Engagement

- Good website with better directions to sites
- Better connections with local groups
- Parks and Recreation does a good job soliciting community input on programs

Parks and Facilities

- Off-leash areas are good and more are needed
- The community centers are good
- Pools are run well and more are needed
- Parks are well maintained

Programs and Services

- Variety of programs offered, like the Environmental Learning Centers, etc.
- Great the there is help with homework and computers for students after school
- The Learn to Swim Program is great , it should continue after levy ends
- Kids and teen programs are good

Staff

- The community center staff are great
- Variety of programs
- Good at getting public involved in discussions

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

Finances

- Funding will be a challenge, Parks and Recreation should look into grants, sponsorships, and another levy
- Oil prices are too high and will make operations more expensive

Parks and Facilities

- The inability to adjust to a variety of athletic field uses
- Overbooked fields
- Need more skateparks
- Need more water play

- Many facilities are too far away and not easy to access
- Lack of multi-use of facilities
- Facilities not being open on weekends

Safety and Security

- There are safety issues at some parks
- Gangs

Public Engagement

- Lack of community involvement
- Advertising

Programs and Services

- High, unaffordable fees.
- Competition with private clubs that have lower fees
- Lack of financial and staff support for teen programs and general play

Environment

- Environmental threats

Organizational

- Inability to prioritize what Parks and Recreation offers to the public

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

Parks and Facilities

- Increased need for urban food security and p-patch gardens
- Rise of Co-operatives
- Being more responsive to demographic changes in the City
- Increased investment in Community Centers, specifically focusing on training youth for the future

Green Practices

- Better use of resources, especially fossil fuels
- Importance of sustainability issues
- Reducing Parks and Recreation's carbon footprint

Partnerships

- More partnering with other, outside, programs
- More partnering with Seattle Public Schools

Public Engagement

- Need for more and better marketing

Staff

- Need more staff to support programs and services for adults and seniors
- Parks and Recreation should work to retain staff for a lifetime
- Hire more staff from local community

5. What is your vision for Parks and Recreation?

Programs and Services

- More teen programs
- More “free swims” for teens
- More prevention programs for teens
- Invest in youth
- Make community centers the public’s number one choice for programs and services
- Offer more field trips on weekends
- More multigenerational programs

Community Vision

- Finish the Olmstead Plan

Environment

- Support Environmental Learning Centers and other environmental training

Parks and Facilities

- Improve utilization of land
- Buy more land
- Open on weekends
- Make all parks safe places, staying true to the mission statement

Finance

- Increase funding to be a well funded organization

Maintenance

- Remove graffiti more quickly

Public Engagement

- Allow the public to comments on the Seattle Parks and Recreation website
- Have maps of all of the parks on the Seattle Parks and Recreation website
- Make diversity among participants a priority
- Increase access for diverse groups
- Advertise Parks and Recreation offerings in alternate languages

Staff

- Increase diversity within the Parks and Recreation staff, especially senior staff
- Have a “hip” Parks and Recreation staff

6. Comments on specific projects unrelated to the SBP

- Questions about replacement of Rainier Beach Community Center and pool related to need for facilities and pools.
- Need longer hours of operation at Colman Pool, also open later in the fall
- Develop Red Barn Ranch into an ELC and/or camp, with horses and a swimming pool