



## Department of Parks and Recreation

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners  
Meeting Minutes

100 Dexter Avenue North  
May 22, 2008

### ***Board of Park Commissioners:***

Present:

Neal Adams  
John Barber  
Donna Kostka  
Jackie Ramels, Vice-chair  
Amit Ranade, Chair

Excused:

Terry Holme  
Christine Larsen

### ***Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:***

Tim Gallagher, Superintendent  
Christopher Williams, Deputy Superintendent  
Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

Commissioner Ranade called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. **Commissioner Barber moved approval of the agenda and Commissioner Ramels seconded. The vote was taken and the motion approved. Commissioner Barber moved approval of the May 8 minutes as corrected and Commissioner Adams seconded. Commissioner Ramels abstained from voting as she was absent from the meeting.** Commissioners acknowledged receipt of numerous items of correspondence sent to the Park Board since the May 8 meeting.

## **Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Gallagher reported on the following items. For more information on Seattle Parks and Recreation, please visit the web pages at <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/>.

Seattle Parks Budget: The City anticipates a shortfall on Real Estate and Excise Tax (REET) and a decrease in the amount of sales tax for 2009. City Departments are being asked to review their budgets and recommend cuts. Parks staff have been working for several weeks to prepare recommendations. For information on the City's budget process, see [http://www.seattle.gov/council/committees/budget\\_comm.htm](http://www.seattle.gov/council/committees/budget_comm.htm).

Opportunity/Orphan Parks Fund: Earlier this year, Mayor Nickels proposed setting aside \$5 million of General Funds in the City's budget to be used to assist with several Pro Parks Levy projects that are incomplete. The guidelines for the Opportunity Fund have now been approved; however, the funds are on hold pending the outcome of budget discussions. [*From Seattle Channel*: Pro Parks Levy: Mayor Nickels' 2008 Proposed Budget addressed how the maintenance and operations programs funded by the Pro Parks Levy would be continued in the future. He proposed, and the City Council agreed, that the General Fund assume all of these costs beginning in 2008. This means the operating and maintenance costs are built into the base budget for the Parks Department and no longer rely on Levy funding. The 2008 Levy funding was shifted to an "orphan parks" fund to address capital needs of parks that were not previously covered with Levy funds.]

Responding to a question from Commissioner Adams, who is a member of the Pro Parks Levy Oversight Committee, as to whether the public has been notified of this hold, Superintendent Gallagher answered that it hasn't yet been notified.

Yellow Seat Program: Seattle Parks has 15 "yellow seat" swings at playgrounds that can be used for swinging by both children with or without disabilities. Recently staff completed installation of 30 more of these swing seats at various playgrounds. Seattle Parks' funding partners are financing the installations.

Waterfront Park Planning: With the City and State moving ahead with plans to replace the Viaduct, Seattle Parks will soon be more involved with planning how the waterfront at Pier 62/63 and Pier 59 will look after the replacement. Responding to a question from Commissioner Barber, the Superintendent answered that initial plans are to incorporate open space to the west of the Viaduct. Pier 62/63 will remain, but must be refurbished as the aging pilings are deteriorating. For more information on the Waterfront Plan, see [http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Central\\_Waterfront/Overview/](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Central_Waterfront/Overview/).

Myrtle Reservoir: Plans are moving ahead to lid the Myrtle Reservoir in West Seattle. A rumor circulated in the community recently that a skate facility for this park has been taken off the planning table. The Superintendent clarified that the skate site is still in the plan, and still not in the first phase. The tentative plans are that the skate site would be designed in 2008 and constructed in 2009 if funding is found. Other sites in West Seattle are also being looked at for skate facilities, with High Point Community Center a possibility. For more information on the Myrtle Reservoir project, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/ProParks/projects/myrtle.htm>.

Commissioner Ramels recalled that this site was originally slated for a regional skate park. Superintendent Gallagher will check to see if the designation has been changed to a skate spot.

Ft. Lawton/Discovery Park: In late July, 23 Black World War II soldiers will be honored in a ceremony at Fort Lawton in Discovery Park. During the war, they were unjustly accused of hanging an Italian prisoner of war. All were tried, dishonorably discharged, and several went to prison for as long as 25 years. After reading "On American Soil" by Jack Hamann, which detailed the event and the trial, Representative Jim McDermott introduced a bill to review the trial and earlier this year, the verdict was overturned. Only two of the 23 men are still living. For more information on the event, see <http://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WM3545> and [http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2004162398\\_ftlawton04m.htm](http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2004162398_ftlawton04m.htm). Commissioner Adams asked that more specifics on the event be forwarded to the Board as they are known.

First Hill Park Acquisition: The Department has offered \$5.4 million for a 14,000 sq. ft. parcel of land on First Hill as a park acquisition. The owners have now upped their price and negotiations are currently at a standstill.

Ballfield Lights: The Superintendent has asked for a review of the ballfield lights policy of allowing play in residential areas until 10:45 pm at night, as ballfields with older lights allow more glare to reach into the neighborhood than the newer lights.

Park Rangers: All seven of the Park Rangers have now been hired, with five working in the downtown parks, and the other two completing their training. The rangers experienced “push-back” from some aggressive park users on their very first day. Responding to a question from Commissioner Ramels, the Superintendent answered that the rangers work until 7:00 pm. They are finding that 6:00-7:00 pm is a transition time, when many legitimate park users leave the parks and more illegal behaviors come into the parks.

Illegal Encampments in Parks: The Southwest Queen Anne Greenbelt is scheduled for an encampment removal on May 28 and 29. Outreach workers have been working with "campers" on shelter options this week and will continue early next week. Thirty park crew members will be involved in the clean-up process. For more information on the City’s policy for removing illegal encampments, see [http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/news/public\\_comment.htm](http://www.seattle.gov/humanservices/news/public_comment.htm)

Seattle Tilth Asked to Stop Work at Meridian Playground: Seattle Tilth, located at the Good Shephard Center next to Meridian Park with garden space in the park, began construction of a shed and garden arbor supports at the park without any knowledge or approval from Parks and Recreation. Both Parks Department and the City’s Department of Administrative Services manage the property. Parks asked Tilth to stop work on the project and they have complied. For more information on Seattle Tilth, see <http://www.seattletilth.org/>. For more information on Meridian Playground, see [http://cityofseattle.net/parks/park\\_detail.asp?ID=1104](http://cityofseattle.net/parks/park_detail.asp?ID=1104).

## **Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience**

The Chair explained that this portion of the agenda is reserved for topics that have not had, or are not scheduled for, a public hearing. Speakers are limited to three minutes each and will be timed. The Board’s usual process is for 15 minutes of testimony to be heard at this time, with additional testimony heard after the regular agenda and just before Board of Park Commissioner’s business. Three people testified.

Gary Gaffner: Mr. Gaffner had read tonight’s briefing paper titled “A Walk in the Park” and believes it is a wonderful idea to close some of the interior park roads so that citizens can use the surfaces to bike, walk, and exercise without vehicles being on the roads. He urged that Discovery Park be considered as a good site for this program. The idea should also be brought first to the Discovery Park Advisory Council and Friends of Discovery Park.

Norman Frey: Mr. Frey is a junior tennis coach and spoke to the non-tennis uses of tennis courts. Many people are using the courts for other purposes, such as bike riding, skateboarding, and soccer. Many tennis players are hesitant to confront these types of users and instead, just leave and look for somewhere else to play. He has complained to nearby Community Center staff about not having access to the courts. He asked that the Department post signs that state the time that non-tennis uses are allowed. He also stated that Parks’ staff members damage the courts by using a water pressure that is too high. He added that the nets are quickly destroyed.

Daniel Johnson: Mr. Johnson suggested that Parks add a message to their garbage can lids about recycling. The message would encourage park users who carry recyclables into a park to “pack it in and pack it out”. Users would be encouraged to take the items home and recycle them properly – instead of putting the items into garbage cans. He suggested some type of design contest and a

reminder that improperly handled recyclables has a consequence to the entire community. Commissioner Ramels commented that this is a great idea.

## **Briefing: Summer Closure of Park Roads**

Rebecca Salinas, Seattle Parks Policy and Business Analysis Manager, briefed the Board on the closure of some interior park roads during the summer of 2008. Commissioners received both a written and verbal briefing.

### *Written Briefing*

#### **Requested Board Action**

The purpose of this briefing is informational only. Commissioners will hear a second briefing at their June 12 meeting, immediately followed by a public hearing. This is a proposal to provide an ongoing health-related recreational opportunity for the public.

#### **Staff Recommendation**

Institute a program to close interior park roads on one weekday and one weekend day each week during school vacation weeks of summer. We recommend for 2008 doing a pilot program from June 20 through September 2, during school summer vacation, at a small number of sites at which the logistics for setting this up can be done in a short timeframe.

We recommend this program for the following reasons:

- Rising obesity rates in both children and adults, coupled with increasing awareness of our direct impact on the climate and the environment, mean that communities and residents are seeking out safe, accessible, and affordable options to address these concerns. A car-free activity in the Park would provide exactly this kind of opportunity.
- Because sections of these parks are uninterrupted by intersections, such a closing would allow for vigorous and sustained exercise that people need to keep heart rates up and muscles moving for a long enough time to be truly beneficial.
- Providing this opportunity on a simple, easy to understand schedule will encourage people to engage in this kind of exercise regularly.
- Provides a healthy outdoor activity that families can engage in together, and promotes neighbors meeting and socializing, as formerly occurred with promenades.
- The program encourages people to use alternative forms of transportation in leisure time as well as for commuting to work, expands their awareness of the impact of their actions, and reduces the carbon footprint of all participants.

#### **Project Description and Background**

Our larger parks have roadways for vehicle access. During regular park operation, people drive cars on the roads for access to park facilities. As part of the department-wide focus on supporting health in our communities, we propose to expand opportunities for walking, bicycling and other forms of human-driven motion.

With road closures, pedestrians and cyclists can enjoy the space in our larger parks without cars. This will attract more non-motorized traffic to these parks and will increase health-beneficial physical activity and recreational activity for many Seattle park users. It creates the opportunity for a potentially significant health benefit to communities and reduces the risk of pedestrian and bicycle injuries within the park.

Road closures entail marketing, notification, signage and barricades to redirect traffic. As there is no specific event activity involved, we anticipate no additional staffing needs.

Suitable locations – parks and roadways – should be relatively large and/or have an extent of paved roadway of about one mile minimum. In the case of many larger parks, roadways fall under multiple jurisdictions and categories:

- *Park Roadways* are paved streets within the interior of a park, these roads fall under the jurisdiction of Seattle Parks, e.g., Carkeek, Volunteer, Seward.
- *Public Streets* are thoroughfares open to all vehicle traffic and fall under the jurisdiction of the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), e.g., Magnuson.
- *Park Boulevards* are public roadways owned by Seattle Parks. Because boulevards are used for multi-modal transportation they are treated like public streets. Boulevards are managed under a formal Boulevard Agreement between Seattle Parks and SDOT. Closing these roadways requires the consent of SDOT, e.g., Discovery, Arboretum upper loop road, Lake Washington Boulevard.

We propose to implement a pilot program in 2008 for Seward Park, Volunteer Park, and along Lake Washington Boulevard from Madrona to Seward. These first two parks are readily accessible by transit, and their roads are in Parks jurisdiction, so that coordination with SDOT is possible in the short timeframe. Previous Lake Washington Boulevard closures have been both popular and successful. With scheduled Bicycle Saturdays and Sundays, an additional 17 days' closure of the boulevard is needed. The parks would be closed 2 days a week for 11 weeks.

In order to clarify the intent of this program with regard to particular concerns, Parks staff proposes the following guidelines.

#### Guidelines for "It's a Walk in the Park" (IWITP)

- Specify that only pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles have access to IWITP areas. Provide an exception for residents whose homes are along closed roads, and ADA, emergency and service vehicles. For 2008, allow people with permits issued to have limited vehicle access.
- Promptly notify residents for whom there are potential impacts.
- Support clarity of traffic flows resulting from street closures with good signage.
- Coordinate with SDOT and other agencies potentially affected by a road closure.

During the remainder of this year, the Policy and Business Analysis Unit will research how best to expand this program to other sites, and return to the Parks Board in February 2009 for approval of the expansion. This will allow us the needed time to work with (SDOT) and other affected agencies, and to garner partnership support for the program. Other parks that have been suggested are: Carkeek, Discovery, Magnuson, and the Arboretum upper loop road. We also would assess how park use permits will be affected and look into potential park boulevard or public street closures that could connect parks.

#### **Public Involvement Process**

For the pilot, there will be a public hearing at the June 12 meeting. In addition, for the Lake Washington Boulevard closures, we will hold a public meeting in early June prior to the Parks Board meeting, to gather input from the affected residents.

As we develop the program concept over the next eight months, we will have further public meetings to gather comments related to other potential locations which are identified below:

<b>Park</b>	<b>Geographic Location</b>	<b>Agency Ownership of Roadways</b>	<b>Distance</b>
Carkeek Park	NW Seattle	Park Roadway	1.3 miles
Magnuson Park	Northwest Seattle	Public Street	1.3 miles
Discovery Park	Central West	Park Boulevard Agreement	2.1 miles
Volunteer Park	Central Seattle	Park Roadway	0.8 miles
The Arboretum (upper loop road)	Central Seattle	Park Boulevard Agreement	0.9 miles
Lake Washington Blvd.	Central/ South Seattle	Park Boulevard Agreement	3.5 miles
Seward Park	Southeast Seattle	Park Roadway	2.4 miles

### **Issues**

- Complaints that the program restricts park use by people who wish to use a car.
- Traffic and parking redirected onto nearby streets.
- Potential cost of expanded closures.
- Affect on park use permits, possibly handled by redirecting use to other parks with vehicle access and/or issuing permits for IWITP days with notification that no vehicular access is available.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

By encouraging and supporting people to do recreation without cars, this program will lead to decreased fuel usage and reduce greenhouse gas output. The program contributes to the Mayor's Climate Action Now initiative, which includes a community component for "giving your car the summer off."

### **Budget for Pilot**

Based on experience with Lake Washington Boulevard closures, we estimate the costs for staff setup and requirements for barricades/signage/marketing, as follows:

1. *National Barricade: \$32,000-34,000, including rental and labor, for 2008 pilot, largely for additional dates of boulevard closures.*
2. *Signage – \$2,000*
3. *Marketing – \$ 2,000*
4. *Staff – no additional cost*

### **Overall Project Schedule**

April 2008	Project development began
May 2008	2008 pilot concept proposed, program development for 2009 ongoing Park Board briefing
June 2008	Public meeting on Lake Washington Boulevard closures Park Board vote
June-Sept. 2008	Pilot implementation, including marketing
January 2009	Public meetings on expanded program
February 2009	Park Board briefing and vote on expanded program
March-May 2009	Coordination with SDOT and other agencies
June-Sept. 2009	Expanded program implemented

## **Background Information**

Regular "car-free days" are becoming increasingly common throughout the nation and the world. According to the World Carfree Network, an international organization, more than 1,500 cities worldwide now have regular car-free days. Here are some examples:

- For years, Paris and other European cities have been shutting down streets to cars on Sundays and public holidays throughout the year.
- In Florence and Siena, Italy, cars have not been allowed downtown for many years.
- Since 2000, when citizens in Bogota, Columbia voted to approve an annual *Dia Sin Carro*, Car Free Day, private cars have been banned entirely from the city every February 1.
- On November 14, 2007, legislation passed in San Francisco to make permanent "Healthy Saturdays in Golden Gate Park," closing the roadways to cars from April through September. A 2007 report commissioned by Mayor Gavin Newsom found that on car-free Sundays on John F. Kennedy Drive in Golden Gate Park, in place since the 1960s, twice as many people visit the park with little impact on the surrounding neighborhoods. Now Saturdays have been added.
- In Chicago, since 2002, the annual "Bike the Drive" clears 30 miles of Lake Shore Drive for a 1-day bicycles-only event.
- Seattle and other U.S. cities such as Boulder, Madison, WI, and Portland, OR also operate successful temporary road closing programs that attract thousands.
- In Phoenix, "Silent Sundays" at South Mountain Park and Preserve ban autos from the road to the mountaintop once a month, and the e-mail is running 80 percent in support of the program.

For further information on this project, please contact Karen Tsao at (206) 733-9107 or [karen.tsao@seattle.gov](mailto:karen.tsao@seattle.gov).

## ***Verbal Briefing/Board Discussion***

Ms. Salinas gave a very brief overview of this new program and asked the Commissioners and audience to complete the survey to assist with developing a pedestrian master plan. The "Walk in the Park" pilot is planned for three sites. If all goes as hopes, it will expand to other parks. There will be a June 10 public meeting at Mt. Baker Rowing and Sailing, 6:30-8:30 pm, to discuss the additional closure of Lake Washington Boulevard.

She next described how the three pilot sites were selected, with staff selecting a 1-mile minimum walkway for each site. Staff will do more preliminary planning and bring this back to the June 12 briefing and public hearing.

Commissioner Ramels asked if emergency and service vehicles would be exempt from the road closure and Ms. Salinas agreed. She added that some residents, such as along Lake Washington Boulevard, will also be exempt. Commissioner Barber asked if the road closure at the Boulevard is a change. Ms. Salinas answered that it adds additional days to the already-very-popular "Bicycle Sundays" schedule.

Commissioner Kostka asked if people live too far from the sites to walk/bike, will there be adequate parking lots to drive there. The Superintendent answered that staff will look at the sites on a one-by-one basis. The City is also considering closing some of its streets so that families can walk closer to home.

Commissioner Adams noted that SeaFair is a well-attended event and many people use Lake Washington Boulevard that weekend. He asked about public input to the closures. Ms. Salinas answered that the Department is taking into account the large events and picnics as the road closures are scheduled. The public will have an additional opportunity to weigh in at the Park Board's June 12 public hearing.



Commissioners thanked Ms. Salinas for the briefing. She will present an update briefing at the Board's June 12 meeting, immediately followed by a public hearing. The Board will then be asked to discuss the proposal and make a recommendation to the Superintendent at its June 26 meeting.

## **Briefing: Non-Tennis Activities on Tennis Courts**

Dennis Cook, Seattle Parks' Citywide Athletics Manager, provided a preliminary briefing to Commissioners on the proposal for non-tennis activities on tennis courts. The Park Board has scheduled a public hearing on this issue at the July 24 meeting. Commissioners received a written briefing prior to tonight's meeting.

### *Written Briefing*

#### **Requested Board Action**

This is an informational briefing on a pilot proposal to allow non-tennis activity on tennis courts. A public hearing will be scheduled before the Board on this issue, after which we will request a Board recommendation.

#### **Project Description and Background**

Dodge ball, the game you once played in the school yard in grade school, is back and going strong. Since the summer of 2007 a group of dodge ball lovers have been meeting twice a week at Bobby Morris Playfield, commandeering a tennis court and playing dodge ball until the late evening. This has caused conflicts with neighbors and tennis court users.

Parks and Recreation Policy does not permit this activity:

Tennis courts are to be used only for tennis or other Department approved activities. (Policy 060-P7.3.1, Section 4.1.6)

#### **Pilot Project Recommendation**

Parks and Recreation staff discussed the issue of non-tennis use of tennis courts with our Sportsfield Review Committee (SRC). The SRC recommendation, and one that Parks and Recreation supports, is to conduct a pilot project that will allow the dodge ball group the opportunity to use one tennis court at Bobby Morris Playfield twice a week, with following parameters:

1. Signage is placed at the site stating the time and dates the court will be used for dodge ball;
2. Rules and Regulations will be posted at the site if they are different from our current tennis court rules;
3. The use will have to be permitted through the Citywide Athletics Scheduling Office;
4. When courts are permitted for non-tennis use, a set of rules are provided to the users; and
5. The organization will be informed this will be a one year pilot program.

If there is concern about conducting this pilot exclusively at Bobby Morris, another option is to permit the group at Bobby Morris once a week and at either the upper or lower courts at Volunteer Park once a week (operating under the same parameters outlined above). The pilot would last one year, after which Parks and Recreation will evaluate the program and return to the Park Board with a report and recommendation on continuation.

#### **Issues**

- There may be complaints from neighbors about the noise from dodge ball, as well as from tennis players unable to use the court. We would mitigate this by signing the court with the permitted non-tennis uses in an effort to provide communication and let them know about the pilot evaluation.
- There may be complaints from other potential non-tennis users as we would not allow their activities on a drop-in, free basis.



**Citizen Concern/Opposition:** The availability of tennis courts is a concern of tennis users. Also, a complaint was sent to the Superintendents Office regarding activity at the Bobby Morris Tennis Courts during dodge ball matches.

### **Schedule**

Present Briefing Paper to Park Board on May 22, 2008

Hold a public meeting to discuss the pilot – June 2008

Return to Park Board for a recommendation – June/July 2008

### **Public Involvement Process**

None to date

Park Board Meeting May 22, 2008

Future Park Board public hearing

**Additional Information:** Dennis Cook at [dennis.cook@seattle.gov](mailto:dennis.cook@seattle.gov); 684-7094

### ***Verbal Briefing/Board Discussion***

Mr. Cook briefly reviewed the purpose of tonight's briefing. Parks staff are asking for a one-year pilot program to permit [issue a permit upon request and charge a fee for] dodge ball on the tennis courts at Cal Anderson Park.

In response to a question from Commissioner Barber on what the current policy allows, Mr. Cook answered that it allows tennis only to be played on the courts. Commissioner Kostka referred to earlier citizen testimony that non-tennis activities can damage the surface of the courts and that the nets sag after play; she asked if dodge ball can cause damage. Mr. Cook answered that dodge ball players must wear shoes during play and that the net does not need to be up for dodge ball. Players can unhook and re-hook the net. In dodge ball games, players use one side of the tennis court and observers stand on the other side.

Commissioner Ramels asked how far in advance a tennis court can be reserved and asked about the fee schedule. Mr. Cook answered that a court can be reserved one year in advance, and the cost is \$10.00 for 1-1/2 hours of play. Drop-in dodge ball would not be allowed. Commissioner Ramels asked if there are any competing groups playing dodge ball and Mr. Cook answered not in this area. Commissioner Ramels asked about the surface of the courts and Mr. Cook answered that they are all concrete – none of Seattle Park's courts are clay. Commissioner Ramels observed, while on a tour of several parks, a tennis court at Kinnear Park which was covered in leaves and appeared to have little use. Deputy Superintendent Williams responded that some tennis court surfaces need re-surfacing but there are no budget funds to do so. Therefore, the courts are not permitted for any uses. Commissioner Adams, a tennis player, noted that he used to play at that court and it was well used.

Commissioner Adams then asked if tennis courts are underutilized in the area around Cal Anderson Park. Mr. Cook answered that some courts are well used and others aren't. The court at Cal Anderson is not permitted [reserved and paid for ahead of time] a lot for tennis. Commissioner Adams asked that the pilot be held on tennis courts that are used on a less frequent basis. He also asked if there could be unanticipated results from this pilot. Will other sports, such as skateboarding, be permitted on the courts – where will the uses stop? Mr. Cook answered that all these issues will be looked at during the pilot.

Superintendent Gallagher listed the types of sports that were available in parks when he was a child: softball, baseball, tennis, etc. Those sports are still available today, but other types of sports, such as dodge ball and skateboarding, have grown in popularity and Seattle hasn't kept up with the demand

for these. Seattle Parks is now looking at how to best utilize the assets it already has to benefit the greatest number of people.

Commissioner Barber asked if the high fences around tennis courts work well for both tennis and dodge ball and Mr. Cook agreed. Commissioner Ranade asked if staff anticipate any dodge ball leagues developing and whether other proposals to use the courts have come forth, such as roller hockey, and what hours of play will be allowed for dodge ball. Mr. Cook answered that all these will be addressed with very specific information at the public hearing.

Commissioners thanked Mr. Cook for the briefing.

## **Briefing: Center City Park Initiative and Park Rangers**

Victoria Schoenburg, Center City Parks Manager, provided a preliminary briefing to Commissioners on the Lake Washington Boulevard Vegetation Management Plan. Commissioners will hold a public hearing on this issue at the Commissioners received both a written and verbal briefing.

### ***Written Briefing***

#### **Requested Board Action**

Information only: Seattle Parks' staff will brief the Board of Park Commissioners on the status of Center City parks activation programs and implementation of the Park Ranger program.

#### **Project Description and Background**

In early 2006, Mayor Greg Nickels' Center City Parks and Public Spaces Task Force submitted a set of recommendations to revitalize Seattle's downtown parks to make them safer and more welcoming public spaces. In response to these recommendations, the Center City Parks work unit was formed to activate our Center City parks (map attached) with programs and activities developed in collaboration with the downtown community.

Following City Council approval in the fall of 2007, five full-time and two part-time Park Ranger positions were added to the Center City Parks unit, to begin in the spring of 2008. To provide an appropriate management structure for the Rangers, the Center City Parks unit was expanded to incorporate the Department's Security Office.

#### **PROGRAMMING:**

Center City activation efforts in 2007 included an array of activities at parks such as outdoor movies at Hing Hay and Occidental, "Dancing til Dusk" at Freeway, stand-up comedy at Victor Steinbrueck, African drumming classes and performances at Cascade and Waterfront, lunchtime busking at several different parks, etc. -- a total of 955 events. For 2008, the programming plan will use lessons learned to build on the most successful experiences of last year. The busker program will involve more parks and include evening performances. Support will be provided to increase the number of International District Night Markets from two to four. "Dancing til Dusk" nights at Freeway will increase from four to seven nights. A vendor has been added to Pioneer Square, a second vendor to Westlake, and staff is working to bring a vendor into Victor Steinbrueck Park as well. For a full list of currently scheduled activities for 2008, see the attached draft summary. This list will grow as new opportunities are developed.

As was done in 2007, the Downtown Seattle Association (DSA) has contracted with Parks and Recreation to provide additional programming support for 2008. This year DSA will focus on Hing Hay, Occidental, and Victor Steinbrueck Parks.

## **PARK RANGERS:**

The mission of the Park Rangers is to support our downtown parks as safe and welcoming public spaces. As ambassadors of the city they will treat people from all walks of life with respect, offering assistance, information, and a helping hand wherever possible. They will support Parks and Recreation programming and community events and provide occasional maintenance, especially during evenings and weekends when crews are not available. They will monitor our downtown parks for safety issues of all kinds, educate people on the laws and policies of the parks, contact the Seattle Police Department whenever appropriate, and provide a friendly but authoritative presence to deter negative activity and to encourage positive enjoyment of the parks by all.

Because it is physically close by and has a high level of activity, Cal Anderson Park will be included in the Rangers' patrol area even though this park is not officially a Center City park.

The hiring process for the Park Rangers produced a strong selection of candidates. On April 30, five full-time and two half-time rangers were hired, all with excellent skills and backgrounds. As a team they bring experience from police law enforcement, parks law enforcement, security, mental health, Department of Neighborhoods, Seattle Parks community centers and Seattle Parks' Late Night program.

Ranger training began on May 1 and included various trainings with Seattle Police (SPD), mental health professionals, a personal safety expert, the Law Department, Animal Control, Event Scheduling, Parks Maintenance, and the Conservation Corps. Rangers have met with representatives from park-based community organizations and had "ride-alongs" with SPD community policing and drug and alcohol units. SPD has been cooperative and helpful in supporting a strong ongoing relationship with the Rangers. The Rangers, though not yet fully staffed, begin performing regular shifts on May 14.

### **Public Involvement Process**

The Parks and Public Spaces Task Force included a representative from the downtown community, the Mayor's Office, the Board of Park Commissioners, and Seattle Parks and Recreation. It met 12 times in 2005. To collect public comment on its final report an open house and two public meetings were held in January of 2006, a website was created, and comments were collected until February 2006.

Public process for the Park Rangers was carried out as part of the standard City of Seattle budget process.

### **Budget**

Center City Parks Programming:	\$155,000
Park Rangers:	\$458,955

### **Schedule**

Programming will emphasize June through September, but is ongoing and will include holiday events and various activities throughout the year.

Park Rangers are all permanent, regular employees and will work year-round. Shift schedules will be adjusted as needed to meet seasonal demands.

### **Additional Information**

For more information, please contact Victoria Schoenburg at [victoria.schoenburg@seattle.gov](mailto:victoria.schoenburg@seattle.gov) or 206-684-7031.

**Attachments:** Draft schedule for summer programming  
Map of Center City Parks.

**CENTER CITY PARKS 2008 - DRAFT**  
*Explore Life Between Buildings!!*  
[www.seattle.gov/parks/centercity](http://www.seattle.gov/parks/centercity)

This summer our Center City parks will once again offer movies, concerts, dancing and a whole lot more—all part of Mayor Greg Nickels' Center City Initiative for a lively, welcoming downtown. Check out the street performers. Explore the International District Night Market. Learn to salsa or waltz at Dancing til Dusk. It's all happening in these and other Center City parks:

Occidental Square, Occidental Ave. S and S Main St.  
Hing Hay Park, 423 Maynard Ave. S  
Freeway Park, 700 Seneca St.  
Pioneer Square, 100 Yesler Way  
Westlake Park, 401 Pine St.  
Waterfront Park, 1301 Alaskan Way  
Victor Steinbrueck Park, 2001 Western Ave.



**WI-FI HOT SPOT**

The City of Seattle provides free wireless Internet access in Freeway, Occidental, Westlake, and Victor Steinbrueck Parks, and in the Plaza at the City Hall. Users can log in using **seattlewifi** for the ssid.

**BUSKERS**

Street performers of all kinds will display their talents on accordions, yo-yo's, flutes, toy pianos, violins, their own two feet...the list is as varied as city life. Weekday lunchtimes and early evenings (and some weekends): Cal Anderson, Counterbalance, Freeway, Hing Hay, Occidental Square, Pioneer Square, Westlake, and Waterfront.

**CENTER CITY CINEMA: Outdoor Movies in the Park**

***Movies begin at sunset!***

- August 9: *Transformers* - Hing Hay Park
- August 16: *The One* - Hing Hay Park
- August 23: Shalon Soccer - Hing Hay Park
- Sept. 4: *Pirates of the Caribbean: Curse of the Black Pearl* - Occidental Square
- Sept. 6: *Ratatouille* - Hing Hay Park
- Sept. 11: *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest* - Occidental Square
- Sept. 18: *Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End* - Occidental Square

## MUSIC IN THE PARK

**"Out to Lunch" Concert Series, noon – 1:30** Downtown Seattle Association Info:  
[www.downtownsummer.com](http://www.downtownsummer.com)

*Occidental Square:* July 8-11 & July 29-Aug 1

*Westlake Park: July 15 – 18 & August 19-22*

*Freeway Park:* July 22 – 25

*Victor Steinbrueck:* Aug 12- 15

**Evening Concert Series 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.** Occidental Square, June 5 , July 3, August 7, September 4, 11 & 18, October 2 and November 6. For the complete entertainment lineup, please call 206.653.5025.or visit <http://www.pioneersquare.org/calendar.htm>

**Music Fridays, Noon – 1 p.m., Cascade Park – to be determined**

**Summer Sundays, Noon - 1:30 pm.** Waterfront Park , July 13, 20, 27, August 3, 10, 17 and 24

**Seattle Presents** at the Pike Place Market or Westlake, 5:30 .p.m. -7:30 p.m. August 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29

### OUTDOOR DANCING

**Dancing 'Til Dusk.** Freeway Park, July 17- August 28, 6 - 9 p.m. Thursday nights. Each night will feature a different style of live music and dancing on a newly expanded dance floor. Pre-dance lessons (beginner level) are available from 6 – 7 p.m., followed by the dance from 7 – 9 p.m.

July 17            [Crossroads Blues Band](#) — Blues/Swing  
July 24            [Portage Bay Big Band](#) — Swing  
July 31            [Cambalache](#) — Salsa/Latin  
August 7          [Captain Leroy and the Zydeco Locals](#) — Zydeco  
August 14        [Lady "A" & the Baby Blues "Funk" Band](#) —  
Electric Slide, Chicago Steppin' & Cupid Shuffle  
August 21        [KGB](#) — Waltz Ball Blanc (wear something  
white!)  
August 28        [8-Second Ride](#) — Country Western

**Dancin' & Prancin' in Westlake or Victor Steinbrueck** Park July 17- August 28, 6 - 9 p.m. Tuesday nights. Enjoy two weeks of swing and two weeks of waltz on the newly expanded dance floor that will fill the plaza. Predance Lessons (beginner level) are available from 6 – 7 p.m., followed by the dance from 7 – 9 p.m.

August 5            To be determined - Swing  
August 12          To be determined - Waltz  
August 19          To be determined - Swing  
August 26          To be determined - Waltz

**DOG OFF LEASH AREAS (OLA)** Off-leash areas provide a playground for downtown dwellers and their canine companions...and anyone who enjoys good company, wet noses, and wagging tails.

Regrade OLA- 2251 3rd Ave

Plymouth Pillars OLA - Boren Ave. and Pike St.

## **FESTIVALS**

### **32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Wooden Boat Festival, Lake Union Park, 1010 Valley St., July 4 - 6**

The Wooden Boat Center's Wooden Boat Festival is a Seattle maritime tradition, and this year's theme is heritage wooden boats. It's an old-fashioned, down-home waterfront festival where everything is fun, almost everything is free, and nothing much is fancy. There are fun activities for family members of every age: enjoy toy boat building, sailing model boats on the pond, boat rides and races, picnicking, clambering over boats big and small, festive food and music, and general joy. Suggested donation: \$5 per person, \$10 per family. Info: 206-382-2628 <http://www.cwb.org/BoatFest2008.htm>

### **2008 Pioneer Square Fire Festival, Occidental Square, July 11 & 12**

This Seattle institution, sponsored by the Pioneer Square Community Association, has a long and proud history. For the first time, the Fire Festival will feature a chili cook-off, with prizes awarded in categories like green chili, red chili, vegetarian, and many more! Both amateurs and professionals are encouraged to enter. A select panel of judges will choose the winners and the public will select an "eater's choice" winner! Other festival highlights include the Firefighter Combat Challenge, Kids' Challenge, the Mascot Challenge featuring mascots from your favorite college and professional teams, antique fire trucks, and lots of music! Info: 206-653-5025 <http://www.pioneersquare.org/fire.html>

### **MacDonald's Presents Seattle's Chinatown-International District Summer Festival 2008**

July 12 from 11 a.m. – 8 p.m. and July 15 from 11 a.m. – 6 p.m. Bring your family and friends to visit our many booths featuring arts & crafts, local businesses, and community organizations. On our entertainment stage the audience can enjoy lively lion and dragon dances, rhythmic taiko drumming, award-winning drill teams and much more, including our 6th Annual Karaoke Idol contest. Don't miss out on this special two-day event celebrating some of the best arts, activities and food that SeaFair has to offer! Info: 206-382-1197

<http://www.cidbia.org/events/seattle-s-chinatown-international-district-summer-festival-july-12-13-2008/>

**Halloween Festival** – Counterbalance Park, Oct. 31, 7 p.m. – 9 p.m.

<http://www.uptownalliance.org/>

**Harvest Festival** - Counterbalance Park, Nov. 16, 7 p.m. – 9 p.m. <http://www.uptownalliance.org/>

## **ARTS AND CRAFTS & FARMER'S MARKETS**

**Art in the Park**, Occidental Square, Thursdays June 5, July 3, August 7, September 4, 11 & 18, October 2 and November 6 & December 4 Info: 206-653-5025

[http://www.pioneersquare.org/first\\_thursday.html](http://www.pioneersquare.org/first_thursday.html)

**Night Market**, Hing Hay Park, Saturdays August 9, 16 & 23 6 – 11 p.m. Info: 206-382-1197

<http://www.cidbia.org/events/seattle-s-chinatown-international-district-night-market-august-9-16-23-2008>

**Urban Vegetable Gardening and Composting Classes** 5 – 7 p.m. Container Gardening, Composting for Apartment Dwellers, Culinary Herb Gardening and Salad Gardening classes presented by Seattle Tilth. For class descriptions and to register, please go to [www.seattletilth.org](http://www.seattletilth.org) or call 206-633-5045, Ext. 2.

Jun 25, July 2 & 9 – Victor Steinbrueck Park

July 16, 23, & 30 - Freeway Park

Aug 2, 9 & 16 – Cascade Park

Sept 6, 13, & 20 – Belltown P-Patch

## **SPECIAL EVENTS**

**WestEdge Chalk Walk**, Victor Steinbrueck Park, June 7, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., sponsored by the Downtown Seattle Association.

**Fourth of Jul-Ivar's**, July 4, Myrtle Edwards Park, 10 p.m., simulcast on KOMO 4 TV and Star 101.5 radio.

**Summer Fair** - Counterbalance Park, July 22, noon to 4 p.m., sponsored by the Uptown Alliance and other friends of Counterbalance Park.

**Sandfest**, Westlake Park, August 23, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., sponsored by the Downtown Seattle Association.

**Uptown Stroll**, Counterbalance Park, August 23, sponsored by the Uptown Alliance and other friends of Counterbalance Park.

**Denny A Go Go**, Denny Park, Sept. 13 or 20 sponsored by the Friends of Denny Park-To be determined.

**Summer Fair** - Counterbalance Park, Sept 7, noon to 4 p.m., sponsored by the Uptown Alliance and other friends of Counterbalance Park.

## **OTHER ACTIVITIES**

*Drop-in Bocce*, daily Occidental Square - Kiosk

*Seattle Public Library Used Book Sales*, Monday-Friday, June, July & Aug - Freeway Park

*Tai Chi Classes* – Dates and times to be determined

*Exercise Bootcamp* – Dates and times to be determined –Denny Park, Victor Steinbrueck Park

To register call 206 547-2706 or visit [www.smbgym.com](http://www.smbgym.com)

**For more information and updates please visit** [www.seattle.gov/parks/centercity](http://www.seattle.gov/parks/centercity).

## **Community Partners**

Pioneer Square Community Association

Citizens for Off Leash Areas

Freeway Park Neighborhood Association

Downtown Seattle Association

Downtown District Council

Friends of Denny Park

Friends of Victor Steinbrueck Park

International District Housing Alliance

Chinatown International District Business Improvement Association

Cascade Peoples Center

Uptown Alliance

Seattle Chinese Chamber of Commerce

West Edge Committee

## **Corporate and Business Partners**

Seattle Underground Tours

Whole Foods



Toyota  
Dancing for Joy  
Easterday Productions

### ***Verbal Briefing/Board Discussion***

Ms. Schoenburg introduced herself and gave a brief summary of the Center City Parks Initiative and the park rangers. In response to a question from Commissioner Ramels on how the buskers are paid, Ms. Schoenburg answered that they receive a stipend from the Associated Recreation Council [Parks' partner] of \$50 for 2 hours. The stipend allows the Department to hire people, who usually perform for tips, to perform in areas they normally wouldn't. Commissioner Ramels asked what types of vendors will be in the parks and Ms. Schoenburg answered vendors selling hot dogs, flowers, roasted corn, and roasted potatoes (if the Health Department approves the potatoes.) Commissioner Ramels then asked if this is the first time that vendors have operated in Seattle Parks and Ms. Schoenburg answered that there are vendors at Golden Gardens, Green Lake, Leschi, and other parks. Commissioner Ramels asked if the vendors will be charged the Department's rate of 10% and Ms. Schoenburg answered that the fee has been reduced to 5% during the pilot period.

In response to a question from Commissioner Ramels about the dance events, Ms. Schoenburg answered that the events are held on seven nights through the summer months and not every night. She described one of the salsa dance events at Freeway Park in summer of 2007. The event included a stage and live band. Hundreds of people, from many cultures and 18-80 years of age, attended. Commissioner Ramels responded that it is very exciting to see this type of activity programmed in the downtown parks.

Ms. Schoenburg added that Parks staff have scheduled five concerts at Victor Steinbrueck Park, located next to Pike Place Market and in the Market Historical District. The Historic District Board must approve the concerts and Parks had received their approval. However, a group of neighbors of the Park do not want any added noise in the area and appealed the permit. The issue is now before the City Hearing Examiner. A next step will be to change the guidelines for the site. Commissioner Kostka asked if there are ways to keep the sound lower. Ms. Schoenburg answered that there are; however, this is a noisy park and any concerts would need some amplification in order to be heard. Commissioner Ramels asked when the concerts would end; Ms. Schoenburg answered that the guidelines call for a 6:00 pm end. If the guidelines are changed, the park could be activated in evenings.

She next introduced three of the new park rangers who told a bit about themselves: Ranger Mark worked for 10 years in law enforcement in Hawaii and recently received his law degree; Ranger Christian is a former national park ranger and emergency medical technician (EMT); and Ranger Aaron spent four years in the military and has been a policeman for eight years. All three spoke about the many positive comments they have had from citizens who state that they are glad to see the rangers in the parks.

Commissioner Adams asked for a specific example of this and Mark answered that he was at Cal Anderson Park the day before with a reporter from *Real Change* newspaper. A woman at the park realized that he was one of the new park rangers and approached the reporter. She told the reporter how pleased the community is to have the rangers and then gathered a group of kids at the park and asked the reporter to take a photo of them with the ranger to appear with the story.

Commissioner Ramels asked if the rangers carry radios. Ms. Schoenburg answered that they do and are in contact with each other and Seattle Police Department (SPD) frequently. They also meet frequently with SPD and are giving out the message that SPD is supportive of the rangers and giving them strong support.

Commissioner Ranade asked what hours the rangers work and Ms. Schoenburg answered Wednesday-Sunday, 10:30 am-8:30 p.m. The work schedule is still being formulated; however, there is special emphasis on evenings and on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights. Commissioner Ramels asked if they walk or take bikes in order to back each other up if there are problems. Ms. Schoenburg answered that they mostly walk in the parks in order to meet the public. If there are problems and assistance is needed, they will call SPD officers and not each other.

Commissioner Ranade asked if the rangers have noticed any change in behavior at the parks. Ranger Christian answered that a large group of kids frequently "takes over" the stage area at Westlake Park. Other park users are then intimidated to use the stage area. The rangers have found that if they go over and sit with the kids that they drift away and other local citizens and visitors will then use the area.

Superintendent Gallagher commented that Ms. Schoenburg is doing a great job programming the downtown parks and has hired an excellent ranger staff. The rangers are not there as enforcers, but to walk in the parks and be a presence, get the public behind their efforts, and communicate with parks users. Commissioner Ramels stated that this is a very exciting program and she recommended that rangers be assigned to Alki Park during summer months.

Commissioners thanked Ms. Schoenburg and the three rangers for the briefing.

### **New/Old Business**

Madison Valley Storm Runoff Project: Commissioner Ramels reported that a citizen called her about the Mayor's announced solution to the Madison Valley storm water runoff and asked if this will affect Seattle parks' property. The Superintendent answered that the project calls for large retaining tanks to be built under the sports fields at Washington Park Playfield, which will affect play during construction. The project also calls for a bermed wall, which could impair sight lines into the park for Seattle Police when they are monitoring activity in the park.

Recycling/Garbage in Parks: Commissioner Barber referred to Daniel Johnson's comments during tonight's testimony to add signage to the tops of garbage cans about the importance of recycling. He has examined a number of cans of garbage in the parks and has found that much of the contents could be recycled, except for the dog waste. He is not inclined to reduce the number of garbage cans in the park. Superintendent Gallagher responded that Daniel's idea to ask citizens to "pack in their recyclables and pack them out again" from the parks is a great idea. He noted that the Department has already reduced the number of garbage cans in the parks by 10% and this change is working well. Commissioner Ramels asked that the number be increased at Alki Beach in the summer, as the garbage cans frequently overflow there.

Commissioner Kostka noted that some park systems have separate cans for dog waste and asked where the dog waste from Seattle Parks goes. Deputy Superintendent Williams answered that it goes into landfills.

Parks and Green Space Levy Advisory Committee: Commissioner Adams is a member of City Council's Parks and Green Spaces Levy Citizens Committee. For more information on this, see <http://www.seattle.gov/council/default.htm>. Three meetings to collect public comment have been held, with 250 people or so attending or sending comments to the online survey. The three meetings have been held in the Northgate, Downtown, and the Rainier Beach area. A fourth meeting has been scheduled for the West Seattle area.

The Committee's work will be completed by the end of June and a report prepared. Citizens have suggested approximately 300 projects, which would have to be vetted through a public process.

Commissioner Kostka asked how the “vetting” is being interpreted by the public and Commissioner Adams responded that they realize that some planning must be completed for a project to become part of a levy.

Responding to a question from the Superintendent as to whether the Committee has recommended a date for a levy to come forth (November of this year or later), Commissioner Adams answered that the Committee hasn’t gotten to that discussion yet.

Commissioner Ramels has heard that the Green Legacy Coalition has dominated the conversations at the public meetings and that the sports field advocates were not well represented. Commissioner Adams responded that sports field advocates have been at all the meetings and represented their interests well. He agreed that the Green Legacy Coalition has very clear ideas and are very outspoken about them. However, he feels that the Legacy Coalition is open to other ideas and is not one dimensional in its interests.

Park Board Meetings: Prior to each Park Board meeting, Parks staff prepare written briefing papers on agenda topics, which are then sent to the Board a week or so prior to the meetings. The staff then attend the meetings to review the project/policy and answer the Board’s questions. In order to improve the efficiency of the Board’s operations, Commissioner Ranade has asked that staff not repeat the information in their written briefings and keep their comments to three minutes or so. The remainder of the time allotted to that agenda item will be allotted to questions from the Commissioners. The public also has access to the briefing papers before the meetings, as it is posted on the Board’s web site. In addition, copies are on the agenda table the night of the meeting. Commissioner Ramels agreed that staff not repeat the information in their written briefings.

Leschi Park: Commissioner Barber asked that the missing net at the Leschi Park volleyball court be replaced. Without a net, it doesn’t get any use for volleyball and he isn’t sure how much interest there is in the sport. Deputy Superintendent Williams stated that volleyball is enjoyed by many people at both Alki Beach and Golden Gardens Parks. Commissioner Ramels added that it is a huge sport at Alki. Commissioner Barber also suggested that the Department consider adding all the activities available at each park to the rainbow signs located at park entrances. He has noticed that some signs only contain a partial list of available activities in a particular park.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

Amit Ranade, Chair  
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_