Seattle
Parks & Recreation

Viewpoint Advisory Team: Summary of Recommendations

Background

As part of its 2018 work plan, SPR committed to reviewing and updating its viewpoint policies. This includes reviewing criteria, developing sustainable maintenance strategies and associated policies, and determining funding needs for the 16 officially designated viewpoints. A Viewpoint Advisory Team was convened and charged with developing a set of options to the Superintendent that provided a feasible and equitable approach to preserving and maintaining these sites.

Over the course of four meetings, the group received several formal presentations to help with the deliberative process. Meetings were open to the public, with times and locations being announced on SPR's website with advanced notification. The Viewpoint Advisory Team concluded its work on Thursday, October 24, and consensus was reached among the members who attended at that meeting. Those recommendations were presented as a final report to Interim Superintendent Williams on December 6, 2018.

Membership and Staffing

The Viewpoint Advisory Team reflected an array of perspectives, ranging from community advocacy to interest in wildlife and habitat to equity and planning backgrounds. Members included: Michael Austin, Weston Brinkley, Bruce Carter, Karen Daubert, William Lowe, Joanna Nelson de Flores, and Laila Pajimula. The Viewpoint Advisory Team was staffed by Jon Jainga and Kathy Nyland (facilitator).

Recommendations

The Task Force determined early on to focus on the 16 officially designated viewpoints and set the highest priority on beginning restoration efforts on those viewpoints. These viewpoints include: Bagley, Banner Place/Rainbow, 12th Avenue South, Admiral (Belvedere Park), Betty Bowen (Marshall Park), Charles Richey Sr. (Alki Beach Park), East Portal 1-90 Overlook, Hamilton, Kerry, Louisa Boren, Mt. Baker Ridge, West Seattle Rotary, Emma Schmitz Memorial Overlook, Sunset Hill, Ursula Judkins, NW 60th St. The following applies a slightly different grouping of recommendations than that reflected in the full Viewpoint Advisory Team Recommendations. Recommendations anticipated to have a financial impact are designated with a **($).**

The following recommendations summary slightly reorganizes the original Advisory Team recommendations, which are available here: https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/ParksAndRecreation/Initiatives/ViewpointAdvisory/11.26.18.ViewpointRecommendations.pdf.

Vegetation Management Plan ($)

1. Update of the 2005 Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) to create a detailed and overarching Viewpoint Management Plan that includes but is not limited to: goals and objectives, index or table of content, detailed delineations, distinct zones, menu or library of appropriate vegetation, descriptive of site-specific views, and design specs. The 16 site-specific pull-out plans will be short, simple, digestible, but they should belong to and reference back to a larger more comprehensive document or end-product. They will be complementary tools that are housed together.

2. Apply a designer lens, via Landscape Architect, to develop specs as well as provide technical assessments for each site.

Viewpoint Restoration ($)

3. Provide a comprehensive budget for all costs associated with the 16 designated viewpoints. The budget should cover all phases of the restoration efforts, including but not be limited to: planning, restoration, maintenance, successful establishment, monitoring, ongoing maintenance costs, and staffing capacity to ensure works gets done.
4. Proceed with phased restoration efforts.
5. Prioritize within the 16 Viewpoint Parks, or tier-system, acknowledging that some viewpoints have more needs than others. SPR should take into account the following when prioritizing: Health and safety; Racial equity; Site needs; High Use/High Frequency/Iconic; Existing VMP.
6. Once recommendations are presented, and decisions are made, develop a timeline, sequencing the various steps to fully understand breadth of work to ensure success.

Best Management Practices

7. Implement Best Management Practices to govern the management of SPR's viewpoints, including:
   - Commit to universal language so there's shared understanding and a reference point.
   - Apply restoration, maintenance, and design approaches that preserve views, promote environment, and do not create situations that could enhance slide potential or other risk factors.
   - Develop a multi-beneficial maintenance approach that integrates and enhances environmental standards, including but not limited to: urban canopy, bee city, Tree City USA, wildlife habitat.
   - Prioritize safety first and foremost - existing and projected risks should be factored within criteria, designation and design.
   - Prioritize racial equity and social justice as a core belief to ensure plans, policies, and budgets reflect our values so that we are equitably addressing the needs of our program and the community.

Future Practices

8. Explore alternative funding mechanisms such as Public Private Partnerships and other creative solutions, such as emissions or hotel/lodging tax, for sustainable funding.
9. Continue conversation and knowing that time is of the essence, highly recommend developing Phase 2 that would include but not be limited to: reviewing the designation criteria, process, and developing a clear path for the possibility of adding and removing sites. Because these sites are destinations, a city-wide conversation is needed for education, and outreach and engagement.