



Strategic Plan Implementation Engagement | Listening Session Notes

<i>Organization:</i>	Victory Heights Community Council
<i>Meeting Location/Format:</i>	Online - Zoom
<i>Date:</i>	August 17, 2021
<i>Number of Participants:</i>	14
<i>SPR Staff in Attendance:</i>	Jesús Aguirre, Danyal Lotfi, Selena Elmer

Notes:

Public Health & Well-Being:

- Several times our community has gone to try to host events in our park, understandably there are a lot of hurdles to host events in parks, which is a great way to be safer and healthier. We're seeking clarification on how to do that. *[specific feedback in LOB section below]*
- Concern expressed about cleanliness and health impacts of encampments nearby. Suggestion to stop encampments in the parks, which often prevents parks usage by other citizens.
- The pandemic has been hard on older adults, who faced the stress of possible severe illness via covid-19. Recommend increasing the variety of activities for older adults.

Racial Reckoning:

- n/a

Economic Recovery:

- Recommendation to give community councils (even ones that aren't official non-profits orgs) waived fees or discounts on Parks & Rec facilities like for park event permits or event space rentals.
- Discussion about the benefits of friends of groups to help foster stewardship of neighborhood parks and establish a direct line to the department for specific location-based interests or questions.

Impacts of Climate Change:

- With all the development in Seattle, our tree canopy is being reduced. Pocket parks throughout the city could help with this effort.
- With the impacts of climate change leading to warmer weather, people need open space to enjoy. Also, lower income people, who may live in a more dense neighborhood or multi-family housing without "yards", need to be able to enjoy the park space.
- Continue preserving and increasing access to natural areas, keeping them clean and natural.

Quote(s):

- "..."

Questions/Issues Raised Requiring Follow Up:

- Do community councils (even ones that aren't official non-profits orgs) qualify for any waived fees or discounts on Parks & Rec facilities like for park event permits or event space rentals?
- Is Parks & Rec doing any special planning in its Lifelong Recreation program to help this population ease back into social and physically active life? And then, ongoing, where does programming for older adults fit in your priorities?
- Is it in the plan to buy more properties to make parks with lots of trees, to help attain our 30% tree canopy goal (that provides health benefits)?

LOB-Specific Feedback:



Seattle Parks & Recreation

- Activation (event scheduling) – consider options to decrease barriers for small community groups to get permits to host neighborhood events, including increasing access to resources (e.g., list of possible insurers) to facilitate this kind of activity

Miscellaneous:

- n/a



<i>Organization:</i>	Beacon Food Forest
<i>Meeting Location/Format:</i>	Online - Zoom
<i>Date:</i>	August 24, 2021
<i>Number of Participants:</i>	10
<i>SPR Staff in Attendance:</i>	Jesús Aguirre, Shanyanika McElroy, Brian Judd

Notes:

Public Health & Well-Being:

- The more people can feed themselves independently, the more secure each community is going to be.
- BFF “open harvest” policy (if something is ripe and ready, you may take it). This creates joy and empowerment from folks. “We need to keep normalizing this way of life.”

Racial Reckoning:

- Beacon Food Forest has gone from monocultural to a poly-cultural approach as one way to address racism in perma-culture. This has been their mission with an emphasis on belonging and developing relationships with BIPOC communities. Their end goal is to include BIPOC farming groups in the area with the Food Forest, blending cultural farming practices, to ensure an integrated, multi-cultural approach to farming.
- Important for the City to do multi-language outreach around the p-patch communities.
- How do we meet people where they are at, and not simply expect folks to fold into how we do it today? If we acknowledge racial bias, we need to change the how.
- BFF can provide land, compost, cardboard, and wood chips to provide people to get started. BFF lacks funds for plants, seeds, starters, etc. – Especially ones aligned with cultural or ethnic groups and regions.

Economic Recovery:

- Some of the questions under racial reckoning also dovetail with economic recovery.
- Need to pay the people who are volunteering their time. The luxury of volunteer time is for people who are paid via some other means.

Impacts of Climate Change:

- Beacon Food Forest needs to advertise better how it reduces carbon in the local ecology, with SPR assistance with marketing.
- BFF offers shade, habitat for creatures, cooling areas under canopy for humans and other animals.
- A good site for teaching people how to pollenate – would like to see schools work with all kinds of bees.

Quote(s):

- “The pandemic has highlighted the importance and value of growing our own food.”

Questions/Issues Raised Requiring Follow Up:

- BFF is an all-volunteer organization. Are there ways SPR can partner with them to provide more support and resources? How do we blend this in with SPR programs?
- What is the role you (JA) see BFF playing in the future of SPR/Strategic Plan?
 - *Response offered:* All organizations participating in this round of listening sessions will be included in future communications about this effort and future planning endeavors. To SPR,



meaningful community engagement required ongoing, sustained discussions with communities we serve, and we are always looking for feedback on how we can engage better, understand and meet changing community needs.

- Are there any specific resources for park that can address the homeless problem around BFF? Navigation team, counselors, other outreach?
 - *Response offered:* There are jurisdictional issues at play when it comes to encampment response, and multiple departments work collaboratively in this effort. Jesús committed to bring these issues back to the sub-cabinet on this topic and connect them with HSD, etc. We should definitely follow-up on this one.)
- Please provide contact info for a Human Services navigator. We have an immediate need for someone to help us with camping on the BFF site.
 - SPR committed to getting staff out to take a look and address encampments in the area.

LOB-Specific Feedback:

- BFF programs relate to SPR's Urban Food Systems and environmental education programming.

Miscellaneous:

- Integrated comment: Beacon Food Forest is a prime group to address all four of the crises guiding this work.
- Would welcome SPR teaching programs at the Beacon Food Forest.
- Foraging is a "complicated topic." Some p-patches not available for public. With this in mind, is a relationship with GSP appropriate? Honest question, not a leading one.
- One participant said that it is difficult to get folks to volunteer who are seeking to make a wage? "So, when are you going to pay forest stewards?" JA said he heard this and believes this concept is valid and important.
- "Open harvest: Gotta pay people for their time."
- Lots of trash and "people living at the garden," as an extension of the broader issues faced by the City.

Items from the chat

- "Some practical things that we could use help with on the BFF site: garbage removal, outreach to unhoused people living on the site, help with accessibility: ie: pathways to and from Jefferson park."
- "Yes I affirm that note on accessibility of pathways to Jefferson Park and the steep nature of the hillside throughout BFF."
- "Please provide contact info for a Human Services navigator. We have an immediate need for someone to help us with camping on the BFF site."



<i>Organization:</i>	El Centro de la Raza
<i>Meeting Location/Format:</i>	Virtual - Zoom
<i>Date:</i>	August 26, 2021
<i>Number of Participants:</i>	35
<i>SPR Staff in Attendance:</i>	Jesús Aguirre, Selena Elmer, Danyal Lotfi

Notes:

Public Health & Well-Being:

- Community gardens, urban farms, P-Patches are a great way to support health outcomes!
- Culturally relevant: more potlucks of different ethnic communities in Seattle
 - more ethnic concerts that are free to communities, especially in local/walkable parks (neighborhood scale), not large events in regional parks
- Provide inter-generational classes (health, fitness, etc) for the whole family unit; in case families need to stay together (lack of childcare, eldercare, etc)
- Adding more exercise/fitness equipment at parks, especially in communities of color

Racial Reckoning:

- Those who provide youth programming, do we know if the community is using our parks system?
- *Superintendent comment:* we're looking at how we can increase accessibility to field reservations to more communities, especially for underserved communities. One example: the new South Park Community Center field: we've made the conscious decision to not allow reservations for the first 5 years to allow that community to build infrastructure and use that amenity.
- More BIPOC voices in project planning: important to go INTO the community to hear their voices; not always enough to ask one organization for their input on behalf of the whole community
- Increased programming for/by ethnic communities in our parks
- Major concerns from some in the community about safety at parks

Economic Recovery:

- Specific to Latinx community: a lot of folks in the community don't have social security cards, preventing them from participating in job training programming; other paperwork we can add that would make these folks eligible? (for example I-10 numbers)
 - SPR should use its position to advocate for a path to citizenship for undocumented residents of Seattle; young Latinos are often blocked out of these programs because of their citizenship status
- Sometimes SPR and community organizations provide duplicates of the same services (youth programming, etc); how can we combine our efforts to be more efficient and effective?
 - Perhaps SPR can provide training to these organizational leaders who lead programming in the community

Impacts of Climate Change:

- SPR should add recycling and compost bins to parks, in addition to garbage bins
 - Especially in older parks that were not designed with these additional bins in place
- In Washington DC neighborhood with majority Dominican/Black population: environmental youth justice program; they can earn college credits; they would explore different parks and gain hands-on experience with the environment



- SPR should replicate this in communities like South Park
- Language Access: making sure these programs are accessible, offered in different languages and/or translated

Quote(s):

- *“Sometimes we get requests to help doing community outreach for project planning, but the leg work should be on SPR to talk to people living nearby, rather than leaning on another organization to do that work when they may not necessarily know the specific needs of that community. It’s important to directly connect with people who live in community.”*
- *“In order to support economic recovery, we need to assess who’s providing which services and not duplicate”*

Questions/Issues Raised Requiring Follow Up:

- Parks have become very unsafe and unclean over the past year and a half with increased encampment activity: will this change in the future? Green Lake Park specifically looks like a “dumpster”
 - *SPR Response:* Much of this is related to COVID in terms of decisions the city made around encampments. Additional, as with many organizations, we’ve had significant reductions in our staff, and we’re ramping that up. We are continuing to navigate our way through encampment response to bring our parks back to where they need to be and make them accessible to communities, but to do so in a in a humane way. Folks living in parks have many needs and we need to be sure to address those.

LOB-Specific Feedback:

- Comments specific to Urban Food System programs, Recreation Programs, Encampment Team

Miscellaneous:

- n/a