



Strategic Plan Implementation | Summary of Feedback Received to Date

Biweekly summaries of feedback received through our engagement activities. The first summary posted below covers activities from August 16 – August 29 and will be posted here by September 3. This was distributed via SPR's Strategic Plan newsletter. To receive future updates, [sign up for this newsletter](#).



Seattle
Parks & Recreation

Strategic Plan Implementation Update

In mid-August, Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) launched community engagement to support implementation planning for our [2020-2032 Strategic Plan](#). This newsletter will report out on where we've been and high-level takeaways of what we're hearing through this work every two weeks, with this edition focused on engagement activities and feedback received between August 16 – August 29. We are also posting all the raw data we receive through our various engagement activities on our [Strategic Plan website](#) so our community can take a deeper dive into the detailed feedback we are receiving and processing.

Strategic Plan Background

SPR's Strategic Plan lays out priorities and direction for the department over a 13-year period. SPR paused implementation planning when we pivoted to emergency pandemic response in early 2020. Over the past 18 months, Seattle has experienced dramatic change – a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic, racial reckoning, economic downturn, and increasing impacts of climate change.

Many of SPR's core services bring people together to share space and build community. To support the community in response to the crises of 2020 and help shape our short-term budget priorities and operations, we are seeking to engage with communities we serve about how their needs have shifted since the pandemic. We need to better understand how community needs and priorities have changed, particularly for those disproportionately impacted by these crises.

August 16-29, 2021



{Image Description: The top bar of the welcome page of the Seattle Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan Implementation online open house website, which includes a photo of a woman walking, youth playing basketball outdoors, a young girl holding up an art project, a Zumba class, forest restoration efforts, and a kayaker on a lake. It also shows the dates of the Online Open House from August 27 – October 13 and shows the navigation menu of the page.}

Online Open House

On Friday, August 27, SPR launched an [online open house](#), which features key details about the 2020-2032 Strategic Plan, examples of how SPR is responding to the four crises we face: public health and well-being, a nationwide racial reckoning, economic uncertainty, and the increasing impacts of climate change, and a survey seeking community input on how SPR can serve our community's changing needs in the years to come. The input received will inform our short-term action planning and the development of financial priorities for the 2023-2028 cycle of the Seattle Park District. The survey will be available until Wednesday, October 13.

On Monday, August 30, reporter Dan Beekman published [an article](#) describing the site and survey and encouraging Seattle Times readers to participate.

By the Numbers: By end of day Sunday, August 29, the site had **747** total page views, **224** total visitors, and **81** survey responses representing **25** zip codes. The survey is available in **8** languages.

Themes:

- Concerns about safety, homelessness, and illegal activity in parks
- Majority of respondents used parks and open spaces during the pandemic
- Access to outdoor programs and activation is very important
- Strong interest in increase tree canopy to create shaded areas to mitigate heat
- Interest in for recreation facility hours on weekday mornings, weekday evenings, and weekends



- Interest in environmental education and health and fitness programs
- Interest in staff focusing on customer service, emergency response, and cultural awareness

[Visit the Open House](#)

In-Person Survey Work



{Image Description: The logo and banner for SPR's annual Big Day of Play, held on August 21, 2021, and one of the community events at which the Community Engagement Ambassadors conducted survey work.}

SPR staff out in the field through the Park Ambassador program are conducting intercept surveys with park users at 6 popular regional parks, including Alki, Gas Works, Golden Gardens, Green Lake, Magnuson, and Seward. Additionally, SPR's Community Engagement Ambassadors are conducting survey work, including offering in-language interpretation support, at community events, which during this period included the Adefua Cultural Education Workshop, BAZOOKAFEST, and the Big Day of Play.

By the Numbers:

During the time period, Park Ambassadors conducted surveys at **6 popular parks**, Community Engagement Ambassadors attended **3 community events**, and by the end of day Sunday, August 29, a total of **209 surveys** were collected between the two groups representing **40** zip codes.

Themes:

- Majority of respondents expressed significant concerns about addressing the impacts of homelessness, with some offering support for compassionate care for unhoused populations
- Desire for improved athletic field maintenance



- Frustrating about outdated signs for capital projects and wayfinding
- Primary uses during the pandemic were parks and open spaces, outdoor sports facilities, and socially distanced outdoor programs
- Primary barrier to accessing programs and services was lack of awareness about what is available
- Respondents most looking forward to ramp up of aquatic activities and additional community events and gatherings
- Strong interest in health and fitness and arts and culture programming
- Strong preference for digital communication to stay connected (newsletter, website, social media)

Superintendent Listening Sessions

Seattle Parks and Recreation Superintendent Jesús Aguirre and a team of SPR staff also attended three listening sessions with community organizations to have focused conversations and hear input about SPR's role in supporting recovery and priorities for the future. To identify organizations to connect with, SPR staff prioritized organizations that serving historically marginalized populations and/or serving areas of highest disadvantage according to the City's [Race and Social Equity Index](#).

By the Numbers: 3 listening session discussions held in this timeframe with a total of 59 participants, including with the [Victory Heights Community Council](#) on August 17th, [Beacon Food Forest](#) on August 24th, and [El Centro de la Raza](#) on August 26th.

Themes:

- Respond to homelessness & encampments to increase/restore access to natural areas.
- Facilitate community groups doing cleanups and holding community events to activate and build stewardship of neighborhood parks.
- Consider how to blend/best coordinate between SPR programs and similar offerings from community organizations to avoid duplication and best serve community.
- Hire local staff to run programs to increase relevance and bolster economy.
- Community gardens, urban farms, and P-Patches are a great way to support health outcomes and build community.
- SPR needs to build capacity to go into communities and ask neighbors of park development projects what they want to see.
- Offer programs in multiple languages to improve access to all communities.



Program Engagement



{Image Description: SPR Planning, Development, and Maintenance team member Carlos Muniz engaging with attendees at the Celebrate Little Saigon event on August 28th.}

In addition to system-wide engagement activities, Seattle Parks and Recreation program staff are reaching out to communities they serve through their programs, services, and planning. During this time period, staff from the Planning, Development, and Maintenance Division and the Green Seattle Partnership (GSP) conducted outreach tailored to their work. The GSP team launched engagement work before this time period, so some events summarized here included events in late July and early August.

By the Numbers: 3 community events and 3 meetings reaching a total of **258** participants. Survey responses received in **5** languages. Events included: Celebrate Little Saigon event on August 28th, community workshop with ECOSS on July 29th at Seward Park, the Duwamish River Festival on August 7 at South Park Plaza, the West Duwamish Trails monthly meeting on August 10th, a survey with New GSP Forest Stewards conducted on August 6th, and a GSP-hosted workshop on centering anti-racist actions held on August 12th.

Themes:

- Spending time outdoors with family is a high priority
- Interest in youth inclusion
- Add celebration to build community
- Social media is not best way to communicate
- Distrust of landholding institution
- Allow BIPOC people to regain influence
- Concerns about the safety and appearance of trails
- Need to support community organizations and foster skill sharing
- SPR seems “swamped, understaffed, underfunded”



- Critical to build climate change resilience
- Explore programs in places less natural and forested
- Support for additional dog off-leash areas
- Strongly divided opinions on unhoused populations within parks
- Value of for natural areas for plants and wildlife, access to water, trails and walkways and usable and flexible open space
- Strong preference for online surveys for expressing thoughts and opinions

Stay Engaged!



Learn More & Take Our Survey

www.sprstrategicplan.infocommunity.org

Open until October 13!



Send Questions & Comments

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