Outside Citywide is an interdepartmental initiative to envision and create an integrated, equitable, and inspiring public space network for a thriving, green Seattle.
The Challenge

Public Space is critical infrastructure for a thriving city.

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Health + Wellbeing
- Environmental Justice
- Recreation + Exercise
- Play + Child Development
- Mental Health
- Food Security

Environment + Ecology
- Healthy Watersheds
- Habitat
- Carbon Sequestration
- Flood Protection
- Public Safety

Society + Culture
- Economy + Small Businesses
- Democracy + Political Expression
- Arts, Festivals, + Performance
- Social Cohesion
- Strong Communities

However, our public space system can't keep up with the growth of our population.

In the past, the City has focused on an acquisitions-based strategy to grow our public space network. However, with our rising population density and land values, this single-pronged strategy is no longer feasible.

Park System & Population Growth Since 1960

* The current adopted SPR level of service is 8 acres per 1000 people.
The Vision

We can expand public space by expanding our thinking.

Our public space network can and must continue to provide the full range of critical benefits to our communities. This will require a more innovative and collaborative approach guided by three overarching principles:

- **Create**
- **Expand**
- **Repurpose**

- **Stack benefits**
- **Activate**
- **Integrate**

- **Invite**
- **Stitch together**
- **Relate**

**GROW**

**IMPROVE**

**CONNECT**
But it is also:

1. Inequitably distributed

2. Not being used to its fullest potential

3. Fragmented
**Distributional Inequity**

Some neighborhoods have an abundance of beautiful and well-maintained public spaces, while other neighborhoods have are in need.

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**PROBLEM**

**STRATEGY**

**Create** new public space through public/private partnerships and strategic acquisitions in underserved and high need areas.

**Expand** existing spaces to enhance usability.

**Repurpose** right-of-way and other assets to create more public space.
**Underutilized space**

Many public spaces in Seattle are not living up to their full potential due to a lack of investment, maintenance, or activation.

**PROBLEM**

**STRATEGY**

- **Stack benefits** to get more out of underutilized public land, such as blacktop school playgrounds.
- **Activate** and improve underloved public spaces by partnering with community.
- **Integrate** infrastructure and public space to get public space benefits out of our utility and transportation investments, and water quality and mobility benefits from public space.
Siloed planning and delivery of public space across a large number of departments and agencies has led to a network that is often disjointed and hard to navigate.

**PROBLEM**

**Fragmentation**

**STRATEGY**

*Invite* people outside through safe, green networks that lead to both local and regional public spaces.

*Stitch together* habitat corridors, trail systems, open space, and shorelines to support both human and wildlife connectivity.

*Relate* public spaces to community needs through culturally-informed design and programming.
Outside Citywide has been refining these strategies by stitching together new and existing public spaces in South Park to form an integrated network in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Bringing the Vision to Life in South Park

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Gathering + cultural spaces

Expanded tree canopy + floodable open space

Park activation and expansion through ROW

Waterfront trail

Restored shoreline + sea level rise protection

FUTURE SOUTH PARK RIVERWALK
Partnering with the Duwamish Valley Youth Corps, we are teaching local youth about urban planning and design, and supporting them to envision and create the future Riverwalk.

The youth begin by designing and painting a mural on a segment of the roadway by the largest existing shoreline public space. This artwork is intended to catalyze work to create the future connections along the Riverwalk while also bolstering neighborhood identity and safety.
By analyzing what areas of the city are underserved by existing public spaces as well as which communities are most in need of the benefits that public spaces provide, Outside Citywide has identified priority areas across the city for public space expansions and improvements.

EXPLORE THE MAPS AT:
Tinyurl.com/OutsideCitywide
Specific Opportunities

Cross-Sector Collaboration

Engaging Youth

Partnering with Artists

Parks next to Affordable Housing

Green Career Pathways

Community Co-Ownership

Greening School Yards

Restoration + Trails in Greenbelts

Public Green Roofs
Seattle has a proud legacy of innovation and collaboration to deliver high quality public space, from the early planning of the Olmsted Brothers to the Forward Thrust bonds of the late 1960s to today’s work to create a new Waterfront for All.

But with unprecedented growth and the challenges we face from climate change, increased density and growing inequity, we need to recommit to ensuring excellence in our public spaces and to creating an emerald city where everyone can thrive.

We can expand our public space network by expanding our thinking. We can grow, improve and connect our open space assets in new, thoughtful and creative ways. We can work in partnership—with communities, with the private and nonprofit sectors, and across multiple city and county agencies—to leverage our assets and create a future that is worthy of this place we love.

But we cannot wait. The opportunities we have now will diminish over time, and the costs will only increase. The time to act is now.

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