



Seattle
Parks & Recreation

2025 Annual Report

Contents

- 2025 Welcome
- Impact Summary
- Financial Summary
- SPR's Footprint
- Healthy People
- Thriving Environment
- Vibrant Community
- Building for the Future
- Conclusion

Celebration at the opening of the Salmon Bay Park Play Area.

Dear Parks and Recreation Community,

As we reflect on 2025, the third year of Park District Cycle 2, Seattle Parks and Recreation continued to focus on delivering the commitments made to the people of Seattle. Every day, across every neighborhood, our teams worked to care for parks and facilities, expand recreation opportunities, steward our natural areas, and create welcoming public spaces where communities can gather, connect, and thrive.

This report highlights the many ways Seattle Parks and Recreation supported healthy people, a thriving environment, vibrant community, and long-term investments in public spaces throughout 2025. Behind every project, program, restoration effort, recreation class, and cleaned restroom is the work of dedicated employees, volunteers, community organizations, and partners who care deeply about this city and the people who live, work and play here.

2025 also marked an important milestone: the halfway point of the 2023–2028 Park District financial plan, known as Cycle 2. Much of our work remains focused on delivering the commitments and outcomes established for this six-year cycle while also adapting to emerging needs and opportunities across Seattle's park and recreation system.

- For our next annual report, Seattle Parks and Recreation will release a more comprehensive Mid-Cycle Evaluation that takes a deeper look at progress, outcomes, and lessons learned during Cycle 2 rather than a look at 2026 alone.
- At the same time, we are beginning to look ahead. Seattle plans for parks and recreation investments in six-year cycles, and work is underway to prepare for Park District Cycle 3. Community engagement is a year-round part of how SPR operates. We regularly hear from community members through public meetings, recreation programs, volunteer activities, advisory groups, social media, emails, calls, surveys and everyday conversations between staff and the people we serve. These ongoing interactions help inform our decisions and shape our work across the city.
- As we prepare for Park District Cycle 3, we will build on this continuous dialogue through additional focused outreach and engagement opportunities designed to gather broader community input on the future of parks and natural areas, recreation programs and facilities, and public spaces and amenities throughout Seattle. Community participation will remain essential as we work together to identify priorities, address emerging needs, and help shape the next chapter of Seattle's parks and recreation system.

Belonging remains central to our mission. These are your parks, your trails, your community centers, your playfields, and your gathering spaces. Parks and recreation spaces are among the city's most important "third places," spaces beyond home and work where people can gather, celebrate, exercise, reflect, learn, and build community. We remain committed to creating spaces where all people feel welcomed, connected, safe, and reflected in the life of our city. Thank you to our employees, volunteers, partners, advocates, and community members whose continued care, stewardship, and support of Seattle's parks and recreation system is integral to this work.

Sincerely,



Michele Finnegan
Interim Superintendent
Seattle Parks and Recreation

Dear Seattle Residents,

In this report, Seattle's parks and recreation facilities are described as *everyone's backyard*¹: places where neighbors meet, children play, and people connect with nature and with one another. They are where Seattle becomes a community – and that's why, as members of the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners, we take seriously our oversight responsibilities for this essential public trust.

The Board, through its Performance Oversight Subcommittee, works with Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) to review progress, evaluate performance metrics, and support accountability with the public. We appreciate the department's transparency, reflected through this report and in its ongoing engagement with the community.

This year, we are encouraged by continued progress across the system: maintaining community center hours, robust volunteer participation, improvements to park maintenance (particularly public restrooms), and other steps to make parks safer, cleaner, and more welcoming.

We are also looking ahead closely at major capital projects. As these investments move forward, the Board remains committed to careful oversight to help ensure projects are delivered thoughtfully and expeditiously. We share the public's eagerness to see these projects take shape across the city.

In our roles on the Board, we see firsthand the work of staff, volunteers, and community members who dedicate themselves to preserving and improving these extraordinary public spaces. Thank you for inspiring us through your work.

And we appreciate our many fellow Seattleites who use, support, and advocate for parks and recreation – including those who bring ideas and concerns to our public meetings. Thank you for your voices, your partnership, and your enduring belief that Seattle's parks should always reflect the very best of our city.

Sincerely,

Ryan Baum and Whitney Nakamura

2026 Co-Chairs of the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners

¹Thanks to Carol Baxter-Clubine, of SPR's Lifelong Recreation program, for this beautiful concept!



Facilitated play at Pratt Park during 2025 Summer Food and Fitness.

Welcome to Seattle Parks and Recreation's 2025 Annual Report!

Annual Reporting

Providing annual reports on our activities has been a key element of our accountability to residents and taxpayers since the Park District was established. Recognizing the intertwined nature of our funding, our Cycle 2 reports offer a holistic view of our accomplishments across all funding streams—not just Park District dollars. We will continue to report specifics of Park District spending in [detailed appendices](#), as well as additional performance data and project details.

The Seattle Park District & Cycle 2

Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) fosters well-being for employees and the public as we implement initiatives centering healthy people, a thriving environment, and vibrant community. 2025 marked the third year—and the halfway point—of the Cycle 2 (2023–2028) Park District financial plan that significantly increased investments in many of Seattle's parks and recreation services. These new Park District dollars were additive to a base budget made up of many funding sources, and we established performance goals tailored to Cycle 2, ensuring we effectively steward and operate Seattle's park and recreation system. We most recently updated these project, program, and service level commitments in our [Updated 2020–2032 Strategic Plan and 2025–2028 Action Plan](#).

Stewarding Seattle's "third places"

SPR staff work hard every day to build and maintain parks and facilities, from upgrading athletic fields to planting trees, from cleaning restrooms to rebuilding community centers. We fill these parks and facilities with programs and activities that support health, steward the natural world, and create opportunities for connection. To further extend our resources and reach, we also coordinate among hundreds of volunteers, community organizations, and partners to activate these spaces. This ecosystem of parks, facilities, programs, people, and partners creates "third places" where people can gather and connect beyond work and home. Join us in celebrating what we accomplished in 2025!





Healthy People

Our parks, facilities, and programs promote physical and mental wellness, provide opportunities to build healthy habits, and support social well-being through community connection.



9,635

free meals served to youth through our Summer Food and Fitness program, alongside **1,625** hours of structured play and physical activity, supported by **38** teen interns



1,796

participants enrolled in **1,860** hours of Specialized Programs for people with disabilities, including **46** young people attending overnight summer camps



31,720

swim lessons taught, with **1,825** scholarship-eligible young people taking free lessons through our Swim Seattle initiative



573

lifeguarded beach days at **8** beaches, with **140,560** visitors, **91** rescues, and **16** first aid incidents addressed



20,904

participants in **7,888** hours of Lifelong Recreation programs for older adults



7,671

participants supported through free shower programs at **5** community centers



251,567

hours of field time scheduled for youth and community users on athletic fields, with **10** fields kept unscheduled during winter and summer to support drop-in play opportunities



185

youth basketball teams, **24** volleyball teams, **12** track teams, and **21** free summer camps coordinated by SPR Youth Athletics



Thriving Environment

We support a thriving environment through equitable park access, environmental education and community stewardship, ecosystem restoration and habitat protection, emissions reduction and energy conservation, water efficiency and green infrastructure, waste reduction and diversion, and climate resiliency.



22

acres of Seattle's urban forest enrolled in ecosystem restoration, for a 20-year total of **2,052** acres in restoration by the Green Seattle Partnership



52,627

native plants and **6,860** native trees planted in natural areas, and **292** larger trees planted in developed parks



5,509

existing trees inspected and maintained, with **1,094** younger trees receiving supplemental watering in summer



13.65

miles of trail maintenance (cutting back brush, resurfacing, fixing trip hazards) in natural areas



1

community center retrofitted for energy efficiency and to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, for a total of **4** in Cycle 2, and **1** facility using oil-burning heat converted to electric, for a total of **4** in Cycle 2



5

irrigation controllers upgraded to increase water efficiency, for a total of **33** in Cycle 2



99%

of Seattle residents live within a **10-minute walk to a park**



23,049

participants engaged in environmental education programs, including **3,581** students from **36** school field trips



Prior to frisbee, I was hesitant in expressing myself and self-conscious of under-performing. But playing this sport ignited a passion to get better which cascaded into putting in countless hours with teammates and coaches on honing my skills. Seeing how everyone else was going through the same exact struggle allowed me to let go of the fear of failure and work even harder to support my teammates in games. It taught me grit and dedication that I still carry with me today into college, and it helped me learn how to process emotions in a healthy manner."

— Kelly Lau, past program participant and current Board Member at AGE UP, a youth development program that began in 2010 as a partnership between Jefferson Community Center and coaches and players from South Seattle ultimate frisbee teams



At the Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands, our partnership with Seattle Parks and Recreation helped us expand access to fresh, local, and culturally significant food in South Seattle. In 2025, we provided \$55,000 worth of free produce through our farm stand, packaged and distributed 18,700 bags of fruits and vegetables for local families, and grew 16,000+ culturally relevant plant starts for community gardens supporting immigrant and refugee families."

— Chris Hoffer, Community Agriculture & Ecology Program Director, Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands, Tilth Alliance



Vibrant Community

Our parks and facilities provide indoor and outdoor spaces that enhance the vibrancy of our city and combat social isolation by building community with people of all ages, abilities, and identities. Our programs enhance connections between people, develop skills and provide employment experiences, promoting equity and inclusion.



55,188 hours of volunteer service by **7,437** volunteers



16 Dancing Til Dusk events engaged **5,131** participants at **8** parks



4,792 event permits booked for community celebrations and activities



64,594 community center operating hours



1,128 youth enrolled in licensed after school childcare at **18** sites, and **1,051** youth enrolled in licensed summer camps at **15** sites



10 additional park restrooms weatherized, for a total of **103** out of **129** capable of full year operations



1,321 verbal warnings issued by Park Rangers citywide during regular operations, and **2,481** verbal warnings issued related to the Summer Beach Fire Program at Alki Beach and Golden Gardens Park



19,543 hours of Park Concierge presence, **5,139** hours of buskers, and **22,043** hours of events and activations coordinated by SPR and partners in Center City Parks



*I'm inspired by the opportunity to make a real difference in downtown parks. Our Concierge & Busker Programs help to create a safe and welcoming place for everyone, regardless of their race, gender, color, income, age, or cultural background, and we work to create an oasis for people to come into our parks to relax and recharge. I have often told our concierges and buskers that **we are saving the world, one park at a time.***

— Phillip Craft, Concierge and Busker Supervisor, Associated Recreation Council

2025 Financial Summary

The **Adopted Budget** is SPR's annual allocation of operating and capital resources, determined through the City's budget process and in alignment with the 6-year financial plan for the Seattle Park District.

The **Revised Budget** reflects changes to the Adopted Budget including capital appropriation that carries forward automatically each year and any additional budget changes approved as part of supplemental budget amendments authorized by City Council. Almost all of the carry forward in the Revised Budget relates to SPR's Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

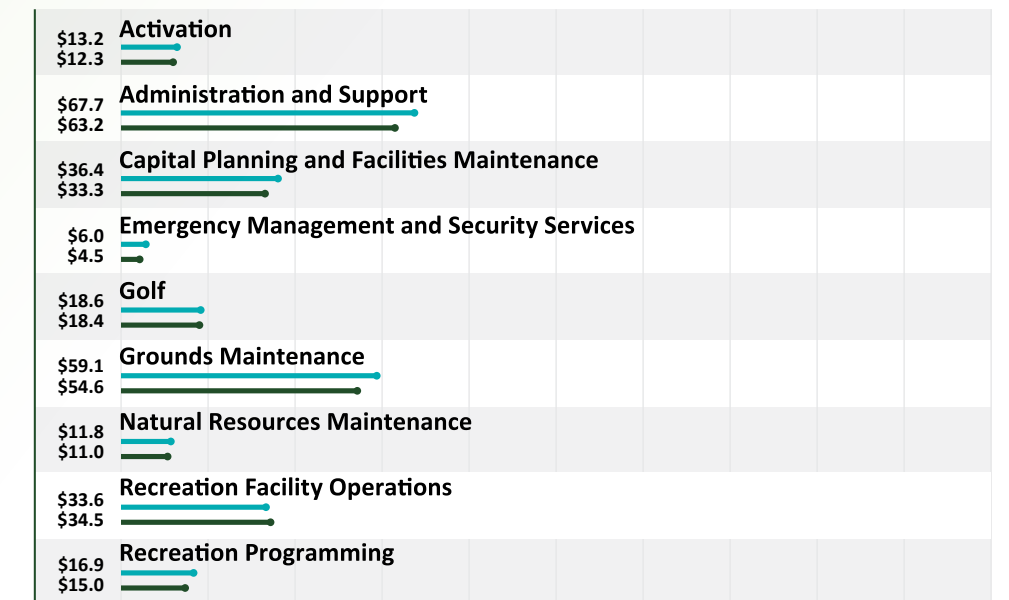
For full financial and performance information by detailed line of business, see [Appendix A](#) for the operating budget and [Appendix B](#) for the capital budget.

2025 Adopted Budget Overview

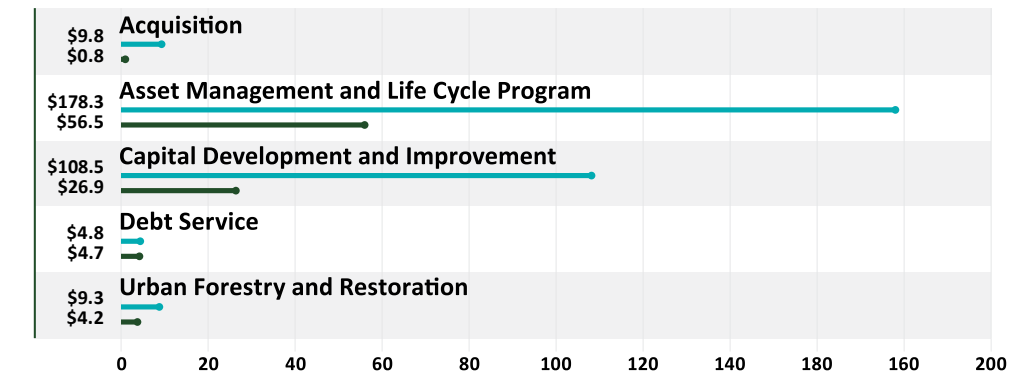
Funding Source	Operating	Capital	Total
Park District	\$78,598,075	\$46,317,706	\$124,915,781
General Fund	\$128,176,749	\$130,000	\$128,306,749
REET	-	\$32,413,834	\$32,413,834
Other Funds	\$51,858,254	\$6,464,711	\$58,322,965
Total	\$258,633,078 75%	\$85,326,251 25%	\$343,959,329

2025 Revised Budget to Actuals (in millions)

Operating







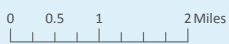
Capital



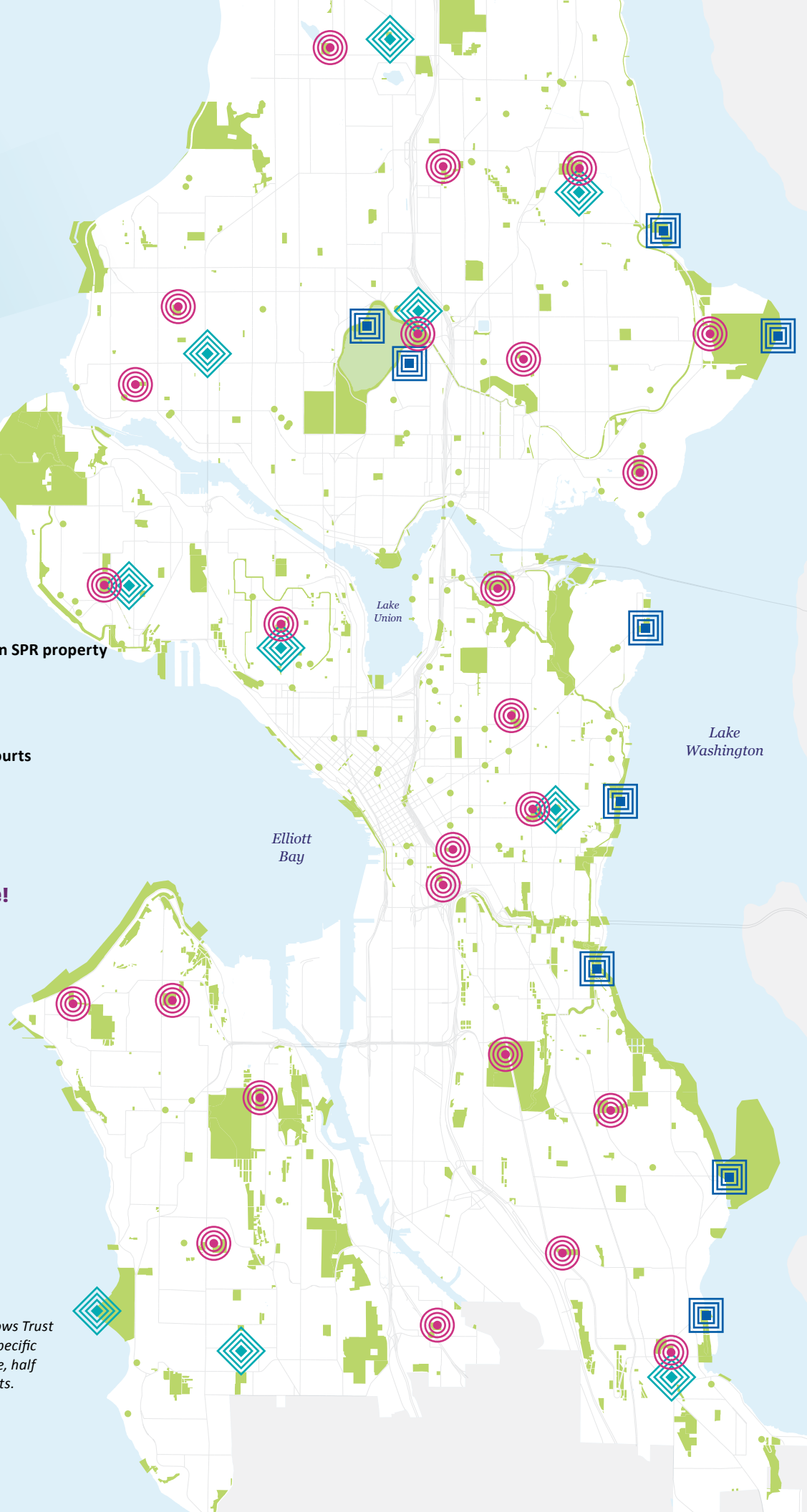
SPR's Footprint in Seattle

- 2,584** acres of natural areas
- 158** children's play areas
- 143** outdoor racket sport courts
- 129** restrooms
- 124+** miles of soft-surface trails
- 123** ballfields
- 89** playfields
- 69.5** outdoor basketball courts
- 49.5** indoor basketball courts
- 33** P-Patch community gardens on SPR property
- 33** wading pools and sprayparks
- 23** fitness zones
- 16** dedicated outdoor volleyball courts
- 14** off leash dog areas
- 12** skateparks
- 4** golf courses
- ...and much, much more!**

-  Park
-  Community Center
-  Swimming Pool
-  Swimming Beach



Note: This list of our assets generally follows Trust for Public Lands criteria, which includes specific ways to count various assets. For example, half basketball courts are counted as 0.5 courts.



Healthy People

Our parks, facilities, and programs promote physical and mental wellness, provide opportunities to build healthy habits, and support social well-being through community connection.

Food, fitness, and nutrition education make for a summertime anti-hunger intervention!

Seattle has many families and young people that face food insecurity. During the school year, young people can access food through their schools— and SPR helps to fill that nutrition gap in the summer months. In partnership with the Seattle Human Services Department, SPR operates the Summer Food & Fitness program, providing free meals, snacks, and activities at parks across the city. In 2025, this program operated at 8 sites in neighborhoods where many young people are eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch in school—from North Acres and Little Brook Parks in north Seattle to Othello Playground in the southeast and Highland Park to the southwest. The Food & Fitness Team provided 9,635 meals and coordinated 1,625 hours of program operations at free meal sites over 8 weeks, including soccer, nutrition education, yoga, jump rope challenges, breakdancing, breathing exercises led in English, Spanish, and Amharic, and much more. 2025 also included a big focus on youth mental health, with activities intended to help teens develop a healthy relationship with their emotions, as part of a collaboration with the City's Department of Education and Early Learning. SPR's environmental education team also engaged youth in activities like nature storytelling and inspecting bugs and butterflies with magnifying lenses.

For many years, SPR delivered these services with the help of approximately 35 AmeriCorps members. But just weeks before the program was set to start, the team was dealt a major setback when the federal government terminated many AmeriCorps programs throughout the country.

9,635 free meals served to youth, alongside 1,625 hours of structured activity, supported by 38 teen interns



Luckily, we cultivate future leaders through our youth development programs and were able to recruit 38 young people from Career Explorations (SPR's Career Explorations teen pre-employment program) as peer leaders to replace the AmeriCorps members. Supported by SPR staff, these teenage interns were a critical part of delivering this program—setting up, creating and leading daily recreation activities, and connecting with youth participants. Reflecting on the experience, one 16-year-old peer leader said, "I've gained valuable skills, such as how to build a community and work effectively in a team. I've become more outgoing and discovered my love for being around kids and enjoying nature." For 2026, SPR will again engage youth interns in providing free meals and structured recreation activities over the summer. Looking longer term, we are considering a variety of options for program sustainability, and the program may operate differently in the future.



Young people enjoy free, healthy food at Pratt Park.



Nutrition education as part of the 2025 Summer Food and Fitness program.



Healthy People

Staying Healthy and Connected Through Athletics

All over the city and throughout the year, Seattle residents come together through sports and athletics, using SPR's playfields to stay active. Read on to learn more about the work we're doing to renovate and improve these fields, partner with community organizations and schools to activate these fields, provide access to new and emerging sports, and engage young people in free athletics opportunities.

Capital Improvements to Athletic Fields

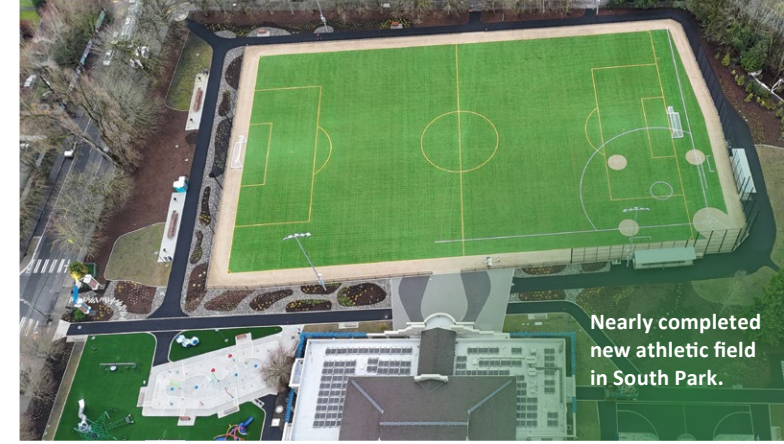
SPR maintains a network of hundreds of ball fields for baseball and softball, athletic fields, basketball and tennis and pickleball courts, and much more. These fields see constant and growing use, so our Planning and Capital Development team must stay "on the ball" to keep them in playable condition. One noteworthy example from 2025—improvements to the Ballard Playfield's ball field diamonds, including restoring the grass outfield and installing artificial turf in two infields. This project also included improved accessibility from the parking lot to the field and dug out, new bleachers, and even a bioretention facility for water quality.

This work at Ballard Playfield is just one of many projects we are doing to improve and maintain our athletic field assets in Cycle 2:

- We are making capital improvements to our athletic fields, with four baseball infield conversions completed already (at Ballard as described above and another two at Rainier Playfield) and three more planned by 2028 (at Fairmount, Garfield, and Lower Woodland), as well as full field conversions of South Park and Soundview that will open in 2026.
- Caring for our athletic fields is also an ongoing task of asset management. Once a field or infield has been converted to artificial turf, it requires major renovation approximately every 10 to 12 years. So far in Cycle 2, SPR has completed 8 synthetic turf field renovations (at Delridge, Montlake, Hiawatha, and Jefferson, and several fields each at Magnuson and Genesee), and replaced lighting at West Queen Anne and Interbay. Even natural grass fields need occasional complete renovation, and based on a 2023 condition study of our fields we are working to renovate several grass fields as well, including new irrigation, drainage, fencing, and turf (at Ballard as described above, and at Maplewood and Hutchinson).

251,567 hours of scheduled time on athletic fields

Newly installed artificial turf infield at Ballard Playfield's baseball diamonds.



Nearly completed new athletic field in South Park.

Coordinating School & Community use of Athletic Fields

SPR athletic assets serve as the primary sites for dozens of community organizations and schools to play. We issue more than 2,400 permits to more than 250 community organizations a year to use our playfields, coordinating with schools, local youth sports associations, and private clubs focused on baseball, soccer, ultimate frisbee, flag football, lacrosse, softball, cricket, rugby, kickball, volleyball, and more, for both youth and adults. We partner closely with Seattle Public Schools (SPS) through a Joint Use Agreement that provides benefits to SPS and the community: SPR gives public school teams priority field access for certain hours, and community users can schedule play time on fields and facilities owned by both SPS and SPR. We also work with a variety of organizations serving adults and older adults, such as the Recreation Adult Team Soccer (or RATS). Across all our users, we facilitated 251,567 hours of permitted playfield time in 2025, an average of nearly 700 hours of sports happening in Seattle's public fields on any given day!

Our Athletics Scheduling team organizes all of this activity. This includes permitting field time, serving as liaisons to our athletics users, and troubleshooting on issues like holes in the field or broken playfield lighting. SPR's athletic schedulers pride themselves on exceptional service to all our customers, from one-time field rentals to year-round bookings. They are also passionate about ensuring fairness among our athletic field users, from large organizations with a long history of field use to newly emerging groups seeking field time. Athletic field permits brought in \$4.2 million of revenue in 2025, a critical part of SPR's budget supporting maintenance and operations.



Challenges and Creative Solutions for Field Time

As Seattle grows in population, existing users and new teams are seeking additional field time, but new land for additional fields is scarce. We generally allow groups with several years of consistent field use to utilize the same sites, days, and times from year-to-year, which helps organizations and teams grow and set predictable schedules for their athletes. However, this means there is very little time left over during peak hours for new groups or emerging sports to schedule recurring time slots.

In 2025 SPR continued our practice of reserving 10 fields (one or two in each region of the city) for free *Drop-in Use* in winter and summer—keeping them unscheduled so that people can spontaneously use the playfield in their neighborhood for free.

Capital improvements to our fields, like those mentioned above, bring new hours into play. Artificial turf allows for all-season play that natural grass fields do not, and lighting lets users stay on the field later in the day. Our Athletics Scheduling team makes creative use of this new time to bring new users onto athletic fields. For example:

- Improvements like new lighting and conversion from grass to a synthetic surface at Soundview Playfield, currently in construction, will add new field time to evenings and the winter season. In 2025, we built awareness of this new field time availability through ethnic media and local sports associations. The result is that once the field reopens, historic users like little leagues will keep their time slots, but new opportunities like adult soccer and girls flag football can be added in the evenings and winter months.
- At the nearly completed South Park Playfield, in 2025, SPR continued to develop partnerships with the Seattle Academy of Arts and Sciences (SAAS) as well as local community organizations to make creative use of this new field time. SAAS, which donated \$4 million to support the conversion to artificial turf and new field lighting, will have priority on the field after school Monday through Friday, but most other times are reserved for local organizations with a connection to the South Park community. In the works for when the field opens are activities coordinated by Sol FC and the Duwamish Valley Youth Corps, and a designated evening drop-in time for open play.



Healthy People

Introducing Young People to Athletics

SPR's Recreation and Aquatics Division leads our own youth athletics programs, with a focus on affordable opportunities to stay active, build confidence, and develop lifelong healthy habits. We remove barriers to participation while emphasizing teamwork, sportsmanship, and skill development. Many young people experience their first organized sports opportunities through SPR programs, serving as an entry point into lifelong participation in recreation.

During the winter months, the Citywide Youth Basketball League brings together young people from community centers across the city—with 185 teams total in 2025. In the spring, the focus is on track and field (with 600 participants on 12 teams in 2025), and in the fall 24 youth volleyball teams played across the city, ending with a major jamboree at Rainier Community Center. Summer sports camps are a longtime tradition for many young people, and Seattle has many private camps doing great work. SPR's niche is to provide free camps, ensuring that Seattle families have access to athletic opportunity. In summer 2025, we hosted 21 camps, including ultimate frisbee, pickleball, tennis, and more.

One to highlight—a youth running camp, hosted over several weeks at the West Seattle Stadium, that engaged more than 50 young people each week ages 5 to 14 in the fundamentals of track and field. Activities included instruction in basic running techniques, warm up routines, and race strategies as well as competitions and team activities. This camp was all volunteer-led, with community members stepping up to provide what for some young people was their first exposure to running.

185 youth basketball teams, 24 volleyball teams, 12 track teams, and 21 free sports summer camp



Young athletes learn the basics of running at a free summer camp from SPR's Youth Athletics.



Repairing the Foster Island Trail bridge.



Meet the Team!
Alex Tautolo, Installation Maintenance Worker

I spend every day making sure all park assets—like play equipment and park furniture—are clean, safe, and graffiti-free. I do this for the community and the kids in the community, making sure parks are safe and welcoming for all.

Alex has worked with SPR for 3 years, bringing excellent leadership qualities and an outstanding work ethic to his current role as an Installation Maintenance Worker in the Central East District. He has also led hands-on training on equipment and safety procedures for his coworkers and previously worked for the City's Unified Care Team.

Skilled Trades Operate Year-round to Ensure Parks and Facilities are Clean, Safe, and Open

Seattle residents use parks and recreation facilities all year to keep active and maintain their health, so SPR is committed to keeping these spaces clean, safe, and open year-round for them. A critical element of this work is done by the skilled tradespeople from our Parks and Facilities Maintenance Division, performing preventive maintenance and repairing our infrastructure as issues arise.

To keep athletic fields lit up for play, the **Electrical Shop** replaces stadium lights when they burn out. To meet stringent public health requirements at public pools, the **HVAC crew** monitors the boiler that regulates pool water temperatures and maintains air handlers for temperature and humidity levels in the natatorium, and repairs these systems when they (not so infrequently) have issues. The **Graffiti Team** works hard all year long to quickly respond to instances of graffiti, and beginning in 2025 this team took on a larger role in graffiti response citywide, not just in parks.

In 2025, the **Plumbing Shop**, in between keeping restrooms running and repairing fountains, also updated drinking water stations at the Camp Long cabins. They adapted the water line and installed filters so each historic cabin has on-site access to fresh, potable water.

Fall is a time to address much needed repairs as well as prep our assets for the cold and wet months ahead. As part of winter readiness efforts in 2025:

- The **Metal and Concrete Shops** tackled a critical upgrade on the Foster Island trail bridge, removing aging concrete deck panels and replacing them with lightweight, perforated, galvanized steel designed to improve drainage and reduce slipperiness during wet and icy times. Custom ramp transitions were also installed to minimize tripping hazards and ensure safe access for all users.
- The **Drainage and Wastewater Crew** repaired and replaced a damaged storm line at Ballard Pool ahead of the rainy season. The entire repair was completed in a single day, ensuring the area was ready and dry by Monday for Ballard Pool patrons and Ballard High School students.



Lifelong Recreation on a field trip to see a troll on Vashon Island.

Lifelong Recreation for Older Adults

In 2025, 29% of the population in Seattle was 50 years of age or older. Remaining active and socializing are critical to a healthy lifestyle and independence at any age, but it often gets harder later in life. SPR's Lifelong Recreation program—which celebrated its 50th year in 2025 and was profiled in the *Seattle Times*—cultivates opportunities that nourish the body, engage the mind, and create community connections. As Program Coordinator Carol Baxter-Clubine put it, “Boomers have made us rethink what being an older adult is all about—as this generation grows older, they are seeking ways to stay active, connected to community, and to give back through volunteerism.”

SPR doesn't operate senior centers or social services for older adults (that is done well by non-profit partners supported by the City's Human Services Department). Instead, Lifelong Recreation provides programs at SPR's network of community centers with arts activities, fitness classes, drop-in social events, and field trips and walks through dozens of parks. “We're pretty much everyone's backyard,” as Carol likes to say.

In 2025, Lifelong Recreation led over 300 activities, representing 7,888 hours of programming and engaging 20,904 participants, often partnering with instructors from the Associated Recreation Council. Some standout partnerships from 2025:

- With the Seattle Theater Group, we hosted the Dance for Parkinsons at Garfield Community Center—a free dance class that serves as great exercise, with the added benefit that dance can help reduce the tremors that come with Parkinson's Disease.
- With the University of Washington's Memory Hub, we lead experiences in Maude's Garden, a green space on First Hill for people living with dementia and their caregivers to connect with the unique respite that only the natural world can provide. For people experiencing dementia, not being able to remember the past often comes with frustration and sadness, but this program emphasizes being in the moment in a peaceful place to evaporate all that frustration.

Lifelong Recreation led over 300 activities, representing 7,888 hours of programming and engaging 20,904 participants





Thriving Environment

We support a thriving environment through equitable park access, environmental education and community stewardship, ecosystem restoration and habitat protection, emissions reduction and energy conservation, water efficiency and green infrastructure, waste reduction and diversion, and climate resiliency.

Ecological Restoration and Mountain Bike Experiences in Cheasty Greenspace

In Southeast Seattle, a coalition of community members and organizations transformed an unhealthy urban forest into a vibrant ecosystem with a unique new recreational opportunity. The Friends of Cheasty Greenspace at Mountain View, Seattle Parks Foundation, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance, and others spent years—and nearly 26,000 volunteer hours—restoring this 43-acre urban forest on the eastern edge of Beacon Hill.

Then to help provide access to this natural area and open opportunities for active recreation, the coalition proposed a mountain bike and pedestrian trail system. Phase 1 of the Cheasty Mountain Bike/Pedestrian Trail (aka the South Loop) opened in 2023. The larger and more complex Phase 2 of the Cheasty Mountain Bike/Pedestrian Trail Pilot

Project (the North Loop) opened in 2025 to broad community support, increasing access to this natural area and recreational opportunity right in the midst of the city.

The opening of the trail system is not the end of the story, however. As part of a three-year pilot project, SPR is monitoring the trails for usage, erosion issues, off-trail use, and damage to the vegetation. In addition, Forest Stewards through the Green Seattle Partnership continue to remove invasive plants and add native plants to improve the habitat in this forest. Since the trail has opened, 127 volunteers have given 625 hours of service to this project, which is a first of its kind in Seattle.

Updating the Native Plant Policy

Supporting our local ecosystems through use of native species in parks and greenspaces has been a focus of SPR's land management for years. After 15 years, and an increasing understanding of climate change impacts and equity concerns, SPR updated its Native Plant Policy in 2025.

Engagement with internal experts and practitioners including SPR's Ecology team, gardeners, and environmental educators, as well as community organizations and Tribal Nations were critical to ensuring the update was relevant and practical. Input from the City's Indigenous Advisory Council helped improve the policy and provided support for this priority in Seattle's parks.

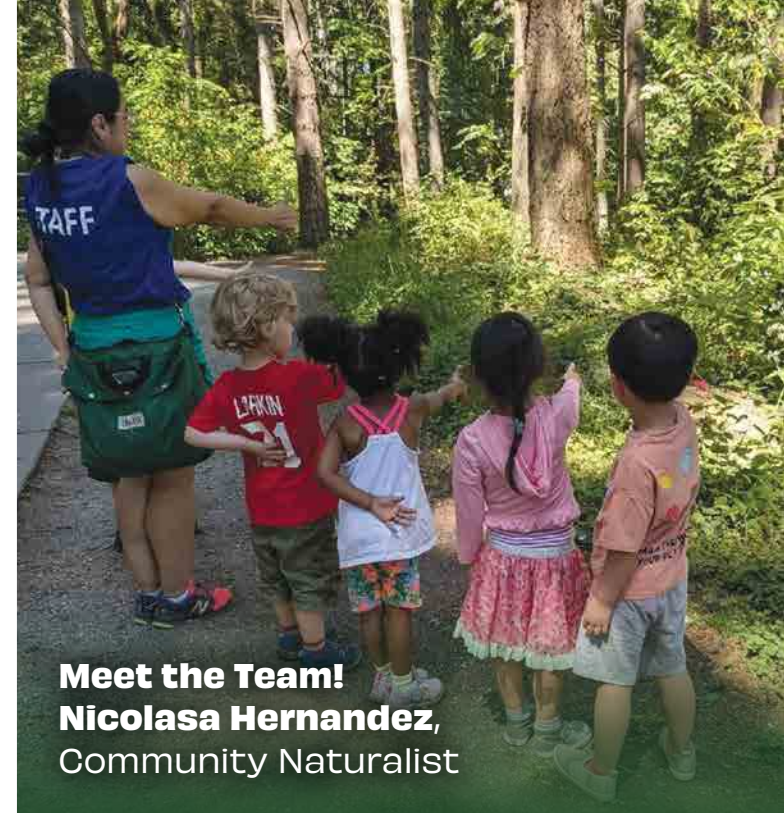
Already our natural areas and the edges between natural and developed areas are predominantly filled with native plants. Elsewhere in our system, SPR's gardeners are now putting this policy into practice by integrating native species in planting beds in our parks to expand habitat for urban wildlife. Planners are considering native plants in their designs as well, working with gardeners and ecologists to ensure these plants are thriving today and in the future climate.

Well-deserved Recognition for Seward Park

For the second year in a row, Seward Park was recognized by the Green Flag Award as a park achieving excellence. The Green Flag Award highlights all aspects of park operations and management, including safety, biodiversity, recreation, access, and more. Seward was the first municipal park in the United States to receive this esteemed international award and is setting an example for parks across the country.

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by third-party judges that assess documentation and practices on the ground. Seward Park was noted for "a firm focus on environmental management, provision for and promotion of biodiversity balanced well with recreation, and an incredibly strong community presence through the Friends of Seward Park and the Audubon Centre." We are honored to receive this recognition again.

A stroll around Seward Park is the perfect opportunity for connecting with neighbors and the natural world.



Meet the Team!
Nicolasa Hernandez,
Community Naturalist

One of my favorite parts of this work is watching a connection happen in real-time. Seeing folks notice something in a park they've walked through a hundred times, or watching young people realize they can teach and lead others in their community. I show up for this work because these relationships matter, and because communities deserve people who will invest in them and the places they call home."

Nicolasa designs and leads environmental education programs for youth, volunteers, and community members as part of the Citywide Environmental Education team, part of a legacy that began at Discovery Park. Nicolasa and the Community Naturalists work to ensure Seattle's parks are places for learning, stewardship, and connection.



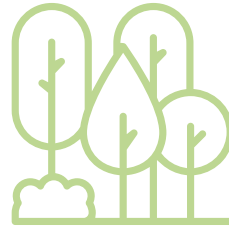
Green Seattle Partnership Turns 20

The Green Seattle Partnership (GSP), SPR's innovative urban forest restoration program, celebrated 20 years of collaboration in 2025. For the last two decades, GSP has nurtured a network of volunteers, program participants, partner organizations, and restoration professionals that understand ecological restoration as a tool for community health and climate justice. Thanks to that work, 2,052 acres of forest are in active restoration in 120 parks. In 2025 alone, 22 new acres were enrolled in restoration, 6,860 native trees and 52,627 native plants were planted, and over 45,000 hours of volunteer stewardship occurred. Forest Stewards—trained volunteers who adopt natural areas, lead work parties, and connect communities to forests—are a critical part of the program. In 2025, GSP welcomed 26 new Forest Stewards, making 168 currently active Stewards and 491 engaged in total over those 20 years. The successful approach of working with SPR staff, community organizations, volunteer stewards, and contractors has been a model for other cities.

In 2025, the partnership also developed an updated 10-year vision and a 3-year Strategic Action Plan to guide investments and focus efforts on key improvements. After robust community engagement, the priorities focus on nurturing a sense of belonging while we restore ecological health, expand access to greenspaces, and reconnect people to land care. Implementation will be led by Working Circles, small groups made up of partnership staff and volunteers with expertise in key topics that will expand on previous analyses and evaluation, inform programming direction, and build on the success of the last 20 years.

Read more about the [GSP Strategic Plan](#) and find out how you can get involved in Seattle's forest restoration at [GreenSeattle.org](#).

52,627 native plants and 6,860 native trees planted in natural areas



Volunteers saving trees through removing ivy in a West Seattle greenspace.



New solar panels on the roof of the South Park Community Center, as part of the facility renovation and the Duwamish Valley Program.

Mitigating our climate impact through decarbonization—an update!

As part of the City's commitment to climate action, SPR is working to decrease carbon emissions across our buildings, fleets, and equipment. Here's a short progress report on actions we took in 2025:

Decarbonizing Community Centers & other public facilities.

SPR is planning for electrification of several community centers and other buildings in the scope of existing major maintenance upgrades and redevelopments at Green Lake, Lake City, Loyal Heights, and Queen Anne Community Centers. In 2025:

- **Hiawatha Community Center** was in the midst of major maintenance renovations that included replacing gas heat and boilers with electric heat pumps. As Mayor Katie Wilson put it, "Hiawatha has been here longer than most of us have been alive. It's Seattle's oldest community center, and now it's also our first fully electrified one. The oldest community center in Seattle now leads the way into our clean energy future!"
- **At South Park**, SPR is including decarbonization as part of a project that will improve an athletic field and add a new play area, an off-leash area, a pickleball court, and a new spray park. Installation of rooftop solar at the community center was added to the scope thanks thanks to funding from the City's Duwamish Valley Program and the Office of Sustainability and Environment.
- **At Mt. Baker's Bradner Gardens**, as part of a project that included a restroom renovation, SPR completed electrification of the shelter house meeting space, replacing a gas fireplace with electric.

Preparing maintenance facilities for our decarbonized future.

SPR's Grounds Maintenance staff work out of a network of maintenance facilities distributed throughout the city—many of which are aging buildings with limited electrical capacity to support vehicle charging, and insufficient space to keep and charge equipment batteries. In 2025, we completed a study of 18 of these facilities to understand what's needed (in terms of specific improvements and funding) for full electrification to support our lower-carbon future.

SPR continues to plan for a second group of facilities to decarbonize in the remaining years of Cycle 2, in addition to the community centers mentioned here. Our plan has been to use a new procurement method (General Contractor / Construction Manager or GC/CM) to support efficient delivery of these projects, and we are excited to say that in 2025 we reached a major milestone after significant work by selecting McKinstry as our GC/CM. As we complete our first decarbonization projects described above, and as we dive deeper into design work and cost estimating, we're learning a lot about these technologies. We continue to study full electrification at a variety of sites such as Van Asselt, Garfield, Jefferson, Rainier Community Centers, Discovery Park Environmental Learning Center, and Genesee Crew Quarters, and we intend to decarbonize several of these, informed by GC/CM cost estimates.



A volunteer with Serve Ethiopians Washington plants a tree at a Green Seattle Partnership restoration event. Photo Credit: Puget Sound Partnership



Vibrant Community

Our parks and facilities provide indoor and outdoor spaces that enhance the vibrancy of our city and combat social isolation by building community with people of all ages and identities. Our programs develop skills and provide employment experiences, promoting equity and inclusion.

Partnering with Small Businesses and Community Organizations to Enhance our Parks

Parks and recreation facilities often serve as opportunities for community organizations and entrepreneurs to establish and grow a business—from small-scale concessionaires selling food to park users to major organizations operating buildings through long-term contracts. For SPR, these partnerships are a fantastic way to activate spaces and generate public benefits. They also support the ongoing vibrancy of the partners and institutions we collaborate with. And for the community, they provide unique, locally relevant experiences and places.

Permits allow for short-term use of space in a park to sell goods and services to the public, like seasonal concessionaires serving snacks at an athletic field during games. We also permit commercial use of parks, like outdoor yoga and fitness classes led by small businesses. Many community members delight in our permitted food concessionaires. These small, often family-owned businesses like Enjoy the Best Antojitos at Alki beach enhance our spaces by providing delicious, affordable food to the public right in the park! In recent years, this has been a growing challenge, as unpermitted vendors often operate nearby (as well as other issues such as the public accidentally parking in the food truck’s permitted spot!). Our Contracts team works closely with these small businesses to troubleshoot challenges as they arise, and in 2025 this required a lot of creative thinking.

Through *long-term agreements*, we partner with businesses and non-profit organizations to use SPR facilities for multiple years—such as Marination at Seacrest Park, Green Lake Pitch and Putt, and the Seward Park Audubon. In these agreements, SPR generally maintains the building envelope and all critical systems within the building, while the partner runs all the program operations. Here are some relevant examples from 2025:

- **Kite Café at Golden Gardens.** A local business owned by life-long Ballard residents Tony Meyer and Matt Kelly, Kite Café is a beachside counter-service cafe and concessionaire that aims to bring nourishing community-driven food experiences to Seattle parks. In 2025, SPR and Kite Cafe entered into a long-term contract that was approved by City Council. Please stop by and enjoy a meal this summer!
- **Pratt Fine Arts Center at Pratt Park.** With a nearly 50-year legacy of connecting Seattleites of all ages to the transformative power of art, Pratt Fine Arts is the long-term occupant of a facility at Pratt Park. They offer a wide variety of arts programs that are hard to find in other places, including teen blacksmithing and glassblowing! As part of their agreement with SPR, they pay rent below market rate in exchange for providing public benefits equivalent to their discounted rent. This public benefit comes in the form of program scholarships, but also capital improvements to this SPR building. In 2017 and 2018, Pratt improved the electrical systems, smoke alarm, and emergency alarms within the facility, and in 2025 they began fundraising to provide much needed accessibility improvements. This arrangement allows a long-time community institution to continue its transformative work, while saving taxpayers the cost of those building improvements.



Meet the Team!
Pamela Wilson,
Parks Concessions
Coordinator

“I love supporting community groups to operate at their optimal levels, doing what they do at their best—groups that grow food and educate the public on how to grow their own food, that offer life skills, learning, and connection for those who are challenged with disabilities, and groups that provide affordable recreational activities around the city.”

Pamela supports long-term partners and tenants such as the Victory Heights and Madison Park Coop Preschools, Seattle Children’s PlayGarden, Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands, United Indians of All Tribes, and Green Lake Pitch & Putt. She started with SPR in 2006, and has worked in a variety of roles in Accounting, Specialty Gardens, and Recreation.

Supporting Arts Organizations and Artists, at Magnuson and Around the City

Music, theater, and visual arts have long been a part of Seattle’s legacy, and SPR plays an important role in the arts ecosystem. One example: SPR hosts long-term arts organizations as tenants in our buildings such as Pratt Fine Arts, the Seward Park Clay Studio, Spectrum Dance Theater in Madrona Park, Seattle Asian Art Museum, and Seattle Public Theater in Green Lake Park.

In addition to these long-term arts tenants, SPR also manages 35 artist studios in Magnuson Park’s Building 30. These studios range in size from 150 to 900 square feet, generally with natural light flowing in from windows. The building also includes a gallery, currently run by the Sand Point Arts and Culture Exchange (SPACE), which regularly hosts public arts events. SPACE also operates the popular low-wattage radio station KMGP 101.1FM, highlighting local Seattle musicians.

Studio space is at a premium for artists in Seattle, where real estate is expensive and affordable arts spaces are hard to come by. By policy, we cap our fees at 75% of market value, based on market studies we perform on a regular basis. As a result, these studios are some of the most affordable arts spaces in the city. In exchange, the community of Magnuson artists agree to participate in open studio events for the public twice a year. Magnuson’s artists range from dedicated amateurs to tenured university faculty, and their work appears in galleries across the region and beyond.

Community Hubs Engage Young People in Arts and Mental Health at the Same Time

Creative arts can help young people stay centered and stay connected. In summer 2025, SPR partnered with the City’s Department of Education and Early Learning (DEEL) and the Office of Arts and Culture (OAC) to pilot Community Hubs—arts-based recreation programs focused on improving social connections and mental health for Seattle’s teens. At six sites (Bitter Lake, Magnuson, Rainier, Rainier Beach, and Van Asselt Community Centers and Southwest Teen Life Center), 212 teens accessed free art programming from 17 teaching artists, including dance, jewelry-making, and songwriting. Our partners at OAC identified teaching artists from the Seattle community, DEEL provided financial support, and SPR provided the facilities, day-of program oversight, and identified and connected young people with these resources.

At Garfield Community Center, teens could access peer support and quiet spaces to engage with free, City-funded virtual therapy (also known as “telehealth”), as well as access to a secure device for any youth who does not already have a tablet, smartphone, or laptop. Initial usage was low, so SPR has formed a teen planning committee to work on raising awareness and promotion of the telehealth space.



The final Dancing Til Dusk of 2025 at Golden Gardens was a Ball Blanc.

Park Activation in the Form of Dancing, Strolling, and Watching Modern Classics

Park activation (through the Park Concierge program, buskers, games, events, and more) is an important tool for park safety, both downtown and throughout the city. To activate park spaces, we permit events, provide grants for art installations, and empower partners (such as the Interim Community Development Association, the Freeway Park Alliance, Downtown Seattle Association, Friends of Lake City Mini Park, the Ballard Alliance, and more). We also directly lead our own beloved activation efforts in a variety of parks. In 2025, we continued our 18 year tradition of hosting Dancing Til Dusk events in parks, and tried out some new movies and events for the first time that seem destined to become traditions.

Dancing Til Dusk events began in 2007 as a way to activate Freeway Park. Annually since, SPR has collaborated with Lilli Ann Carey of Dance for Joy! (who coordinates the bands and dance instructions) and other partners to host dozens of these events at parks all across the city. Besides the benefits of physical activity and mental stimulation, dancers find community, safe touch, and interactive diversity, all while they thrive and

play. We hosted 16 of these events in 2025, engaging 5,131 participants, as well as a Ball Blanc fundraiser to support purchase and repair of the dancefloor and lights.

A first for 2025, we hosted a Bridgerton Stroll in Denny Park, bringing out more than 250 fans of the popular series—many in full Regency-era regalia. We partnered with the Seattle Symphony who even provided a string quartet.

Building on a popular “Where’s Edward?” series on SPR’s social media, in which a tiny doll vampire visited parks throughout Seattle, we hosted a showing of all five *Twilight* films. With screenings across Carkeek, Cowen, Discovery, Lincoln, and Volunteer Parks, these films saw a record combined attendance of more than 4,600 people!

19,543 hours of Park Concierge presence, 5,139 hours of buskers, and 22,043 hours of events and activations coordinated by SPR and partners in Center City Parks



Celebrating SPR’s Thousands of Volunteers

SPR’s team of more than 1,100 staff members work hard every day to keep our park system running and our recreation facilities operating. We are fortunate that our efforts are complemented by thousands of caring Seattleites who plant trees, coach youth sports, lead art classes, and so much more. For us, these volunteers are far more than just a source of labor—they represent the values, skills, and vision of the communities we serve. In 2025, 7,437 volunteers contributed 55,188 hours of service at more than 300 locations across the city.

Sometimes this work happens in major work parties with business organizations. In 2025 these included Amazon, Starbucks, Brooks Running, KPMG, Apple, Capital One, Keller Williams, and CBRE. Often, these major events are coordinated with the support of a key partner, the Seattle Parks Foundation. We also partner with middle and high schools, as well as community action agencies like Solid Ground for major volunteer events.

Friends Of Groups are empowered community members working under an agreement with SPR who take an active role in caring for local parks. SPR partners with dozens of Friends Of Groups; some are small, close-knit teams of dedicated volunteers, while others are larger, well-established organizations with dozens of members. Regardless of size, each group contributes meaningfully to the health, activation, and long-term sustainability of the park system, playing a vital role in activating these spaces and expanding the department’s capacity, helping ensure that parks across the city are consistently cared for and remain safe, welcoming, and enjoyable green spaces for all community members.

55,188 volunteer hours by 7,437 volunteers



Volunteers spread mulch to keep young trees healthy and prevent regrowth of invasive species

Recreation Volunteers include sports coaches, pickleball ambassadors, walk leaders, swim aides, karate instructors, art teachers, and many more—from high school students reading to toddlers at Garfield Community Center to neighbors supporting the annual pancake breakfast at Loyal Heights Community Center. Their work expands the ability of SPR programmers to offer free, culturally relevant, and meaningful activities for people of all ages and abilities.

SPR’s small but mighty team of volunteer coordinators facilitate communication between volunteers and SPR staff, review volunteer background checks to ensure participant safety, and help match excited volunteers to projects in need. They also coordinate the Denny Awards, an annual night of volunteer recognition for those who have committed time, energy, and resources to helping create a better parks system. In December, more than 130 community members came together for the 2025 Denny Awards at the Museum of History and Industry—here’s just two of the winners to highlight:

- **The Marcus Garvey Book Club**, coordinated by volunteer facilitators Reverend Harriett Walden, Sheri Day, and Dr. Eric Stark, who led enthusiastic, twice-monthly discussions at the Garfield Community Center on books focusing on local, cultural, and historical African American topics. In 2025, this included *Caste: The Origins of our Discontents* by Isabel Wilkerson.
- **A Cleaner Alki**, a community cleanup project founded by fourth generation West Seattleites Erik and Garet Bell. First started as a litter pick up during the pandemic as a way to spend time on the beach while giving back to community, the project has grown to support cleanup events and solo litter pick ups by volunteers all over West Seattle. In 2025 the group held 248 cleanups that collected 35 tons of material with the help of 4,800 volunteer hours.

A volunteer on a solo beach clean up. Photo credit: A Cleaner Alki.



Get involved! Check out volunteer opportunities at Seattle.gov/Parks/Volunteer



Volunteers Improve Parks with Inspection Program

Volunteers also serve an essential role in ensuring our parks are clean, safe, and well-maintained through the Park Inspection Program.

This program engages trained volunteers to inspect park conditions and compare them to our maintenance standards. We want to check whether we're meeting the public's expectations—and what better way to measure that than to ask members of the public directly. Volunteer inspections are a way for the community to keep us honest and accountable by bringing a fresh eye and different perspective.

More than 150 volunteer inspectors have been trained since 2016, undertaking hundreds of park inspections since then. These volunteers are everyday Seattleites with keen eyes, an interest in seeing new parks, and a passion for improving our system. Often, these folks started as "self-starting volunteers," picking up litter and pulling weeds in their neighborhood park, and were excited to see an opportunity for more structural change. Some inspectors have been in the program since the beginning; others have made new friends and often carpool together to inspections.

On average, this program performs inspections at 4 parks a month, completing inspections at a total of 48 parks in 2025. Sites are selected to ensure we're inspecting parks across the city and taking a look at a mix of regional parks, neighborhood parks, and pocket parks. Inspections generally take 90 minutes, with volunteers inspecting conditions of more than a dozen park assets (such as lawns, restrooms, play areas, and furniture) and comparing against our maintenance standards and providing a rating. This information is used to improve our park operations and maintenance. Sometimes this happens directly—when volunteers see and document an issue, we create a work order that is sent to the appropriate staff to fix. It also supports our management indirectly—by giving us a growing set of data about where we're meeting maintenance standards, where we're not, and what that looks like across the system. In 2025, our volunteer inspectors found that on average, our parks meet 77% of our maintenance standards, compared to our goal of 80%.

In 2025, we initiated a partnership with Seattle Public Schools' Building Real-Life Independent Daily Living and Gainful Employment Skills (BRIDGES) program that supports young adults with cognitive disabilities to build independence and workforce readiness through applied, community-based experiences. Participants join monthly park

inspections and contribute directly to system data collection and park condition assessments. By embedding inclusive participation into core operations, the program creates meaningful pathways for young adults to gain real-world public service experience while contributing to measurable outcomes in park maintenance.

1,128 youth enrolled in licensed after school childcare at 18 sites, and 1,051 youth enrolled in licensed summer camps at 15 sites



Youth in licensed childcare.

Childcare is an Essential Service

Affordable, quality childcare is essential to Seattle's working families, and it's also an investment in the brilliance of the next generation. For decades, SPR has partnered with the Associated Recreation Council (ARC) to serve as one of the largest providers of licensed childcare in Washington State. To provide the care that many working families need, programs must meet stringent State licensing requirements. In our partnership, SPR holds the license, manages the registration process, and ensures the physical spaces are compliant, while ARC recruits, trains, and supports skilled early learning professionals to lead the programs.

In the 2024–2025 school year, we offered afterschool care at 18 sites (at our community centers and at school sites in partnership with Seattle Public Schools), serving 1,128 young people. We also offered school break camps at 8 sites, and summer camp at 15 sites that served 1,051 young people. On

an average day, ARC's childcare staff welcome children and families and facilitate structured learning opportunities and play. They take pride in creating room for joy, helping young people identify their passions, and connecting with youth, families, and communities. They also focus on the business side of the program—ensuring staff meet licensing requirements, communicating about logistics with parents, and tracking budgets and supplies.

In 2020, these ARC childcare workers (and the SPR staff in community centers and other facilities that support these programs) cared for children of medical workers and first responders, even at the height of the pandemic. The work they did was deemed an essential service then, and it's just as essential now: childcare is critical to the health of individual youth and families, and to the city's broader economy. Moreover, the benefits of high-quality care and early learning spiral out to the whole community in the form of healthier, happier young people.

Our partnership is not just raising the next generation of young people, but the next generation of early learning professionals. In 2025, ARC engaged 11 Youth at Work interns (young people in paid job training experiences) in our childcare programs. These interns got the training and credentials they need to work not only in our programs, but in any licensed childcare program statewide. This was the third cohort of interns, with some continuing on to gain employment at ARC.

Childcare programs across the country are facing unprecedented challenges, and Seattle is no exception. Higher staffing and operating costs put pressure on programs to raise fees to break even, but our goal is to provide affordable options for families. SPR remains committed to supporting affordable childcare programs, distributing \$1,468,843 in childcare scholarships to 441 youth in 2025. We've also begun collaborating with other City departments to support childcare access—for example, in 2025 SPR became an authorized provider for the Department of Education and Early Learning's Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) for the first time, allowing families in our program to tap into another resource.

The Value of Free, Open Recreation Activities

In the 2024 annual report, we profiled SPR's Rec'N the Streets, a team that activates park spaces across the city with free, culturally relevant programs for youth, adults, and families. After their summer programs in 2025, we received the following heartfelt feedback from a mother about the transformative impact of the program on her family.

My young children and I moved to Washington as a result of domestic violence, which had kept us in and out of shelters for the prior three years. By the time we arrived in Seattle, any 'luxury' such as community or recreation was the furthest from my mind — until I saw a flyer for Rec'N the Streets. With children under school-age eager to engage with the world and expand their play, naturally the idea I could take them to group activities or kids sports was a dream. As a single mother, a participant in the state's Address Confidentiality Program, and a DV survivor living under extreme caution of anonymity, helpful instructions like 'just sign up here' and 'apply for a scholarship at this link', although very kind, are simply not offers that apply to us. Every kid should be able to play and take part. Not asking for a name or zip code as a requisite to entry may seem like a small thing. But it's the sole reason my little kids got to spend their summer learning to skateboard with friends, interacting with caring adult role-models, and building their confidence in more ways than I could have imagined."



Rec'N the Streets participants play an epic game of tug of war.



Building For The Future

SPR takes care of a large system of parks, facilities, and individual assets. We take a long-range view of our work, and many capital initiatives take years of planning and incremental progress before project completion. Outlined in this section are some of our 2025 accomplishments that we're proud to celebrate.

Land-bank Sites Become Seattle's Newest Parks

SPR has a goal that everyone living in an urban village is within a five-minute walk to a park, and those outside urban villages are within a 10-minute walk to a park. Currently, we're well on track to meeting that goal, with 99% of Seattle residents living within a 10-minute walk of a park. We track gaps in park access and, where we have opportunity, we acquire and develop parks in those gaps to increase community access to open space.

In the 2010s, SPR used resources from the Parks and Green Spaces Levy to buy a variety of future park sites across the city and kept them as "land-bank sites" to be developed into parks once resources were available. While development of some of these parks was delayed by pandemic-era financial issues, in Cycle 2, SPR reaffirmed our commitment by identifying funding, and added more future parks that will be developed over the coming years. In 2025, several of these sites opened to the public!

South Park Plaza: Over many years, residents of Seattle's South Park community have advocated for additional open space. In 2013, SPR purchased a 0.83-acre site located along the South Park River Walk, as an element of the South Park Green Spaces Vision Plan. In April 2025, it opened to the community with a play area, a large plaza, seating, lighting, and other design elements inspired by engagement with Indigenous communities and local, community-based organizations. It also includes iconic, colorful, six-foot-tall letters spelling out "South Park," representing the pride long-time residents have always had in this riverside neighborhood. In addition to Park District funding, support for this project came from a variety of sources, including King County's Healthy Parks & Communities Fund. Later, the park served as one of several places throughout the city where communities could watch World Cup Club matches.

Cheryl Chow Park: Named to honor the legacy of a beloved former Seattle City Council member who dedicated her life to helping others, Cheryl Chow Park is a 1.2-acre site in the heart of Rainier Valley designed to serve as a neighborhood backyard. The land was initially purchased in several parcels over more than 10 years as part of our land-bank program, and in April 2025 it opened to the public. From an underutilized site covered in weeds to a park that will be enjoyed by kids and families for generations to come, this project is an example of the big impact that can still be achieved in the face of budget and land constraints. The park's design was based on extensive community outreach, and a key theme that emerged was the importance of a multi-generational, multicultural gathering space in one of the most racially and linguistically diverse neighborhoods in the country. A piece of art at the park includes textile and fabric designs from the various communities (East African, Southeast Asian, Italian, Native American, and more) that have history in the neighborhood.

Cayton Corner: As Capitol Hill and the Central District grow denser and welcome new neighbors in new apartment buildings, the need for public open spaces becomes even more important. Located next to the Hearing, Speech, & Deaf Center, and immediately adjacent to a large complex of affordable housing, Cayton Corner includes a small lawn, an accessible pathway, and picnic tables—and opened in 2025 with funding from the Park District and other support from the Friends of Cayton Corner, the City's Neighborhood Matching Fund, and the Seattle Parks Foundation.

Beyond these three new parks, SPR made progress on developing our other land-bank sites this year. By the end of 2025, one site was in construction (Georgetown Flume), four were preparing for construction (West Seattle Junction, 48th & Charlestown, Terry Pettus Park Addition, and AB Ernst Park Addition), while three others were in design (Morgan Junction, Wedgwood, and Lake City Floodplain). By the end of Cycle 2, SPR expects more than a dozen new parks to be completed or in construction for Seattle communities to play, gather, recreate, and build their health.

Construction Begins at Smith Cove Park

In September 2025, on the northern shore of Elliot Bay, ground was finally broken on a long-term community priority: the first phase of Smith Cove Park! In 2015, the Friends of Smith Cove Park received a grant from the City's Department of Neighborhoods to engage the public and develop design concepts for developing an expanding Smith Cove Park. A 2017 plan envisioned a new athletic field, a picnic perch, an off-leash area (OLA), a playground, volleyball courts, and shoreline access. SPR continues to pursue this vision, with Phase I (the western side of the park, including the athletic field, OLA, paths, benches, and bioretention facilities) currently funded and in construction. SPR completed construction documents in 2020, but due to the financial disruption caused by the pandemic, the project was paused. Once funding for Phase I was confirmed in the Cycle 2 financial plan, SPR jumped back in—starting with work to ensure the design met new, more stringent stormwater permitting standards. We anticipate construction to continue through summer, with a partial opening of the new park later in 2026.

Improving Park Restrooms

Park restrooms are regularly a source of public comment—with aging facilities, some of which are unable to operate in cold winter temperatures, and high rates of vandalism and arson, we know restrooms that are closed or need attention cause lots of frustration for the public.

Improving the park user experience of our restrooms has been a priority for SPR for many years—with a focus on capital renovations and increasing restroom access through weatherization. In February 2025, the Seattle Office of City Auditor released a report highlighting opportunities for SPR to improve the cleanliness and accessibility of our restrooms. In addition to the ongoing work SPR had already planned for restroom improvements, we embraced many of these recommendations and jumped into implementation. Some highlights of our progress in 2025, from both our planned work and audit response:

- To strengthen *daily maintenance*, we piloted new cleaning standards, trained 100 field staff on them, and deployed new hot pressure washing equipment for faster and more consistent cleans.
- To keep an eye on the cleanliness of our restrooms, crew chiefs made more than 300 visits to parks to *monitor restrooms* and other assets, and Park Inspection volunteers monitored 48 parks—providing a critical source of data on how well we're meeting our maintenance standards.

- Our shops continued work to *weatherize restrooms* in 2025, making updates to ensure pipes won't burst in cold temperatures so more facilities can stay open year-round. By the end of 2025, SPR had weatherized 10 additional facilities, making sure 103 of our 129 restrooms are able to remain open in all seasons.
- SPR completed *major renovation* of 8 restrooms, from Bitter Lake Playfield in the north to Bradner Gardens in the south to Hiawatha out west. With these completions under our belt, SPR has renovated or replaced 12 restrooms so far in Cycle 2, meaning we're well on our way to achieving our goal of 27 between 2023 and 2028.
- Our design team developed comprehensive new *design standards for park restrooms* to reflect lessons learned from recent projects and operational feedback. These updated design standards emphasize vandalism resistance, material durability, ease of maintenance, and operational safety.

Lastly, we launched an innovation in Fall 2025: In the heart of the city at Cal Anderson Park, restrooms that have often been closed due to vandalism are open again thanks to a unique new pilot program. As part of the City's Participatory Budgeting Program, SPR began a pilot to staff restrooms in Cal Anderson. Members of the Seattle Conservation Corps are on site for 12 hours a day to provide safe and welcome access and maintain basic cleanliness. They also report issues and carry first aid supplies, Narcan, and a sharps container. We plan to expand this service to Hing Hay Park in the future and will evaluate the success of the program in the coming years. Of course, this restroom couldn't stay open to serve park users without the ongoing support of the Grounds Maintenance staff, plumbers, carpenters, and electricians, and many other collaborators in SPR.



Staffed park restrooms at Cal Anderson Park.

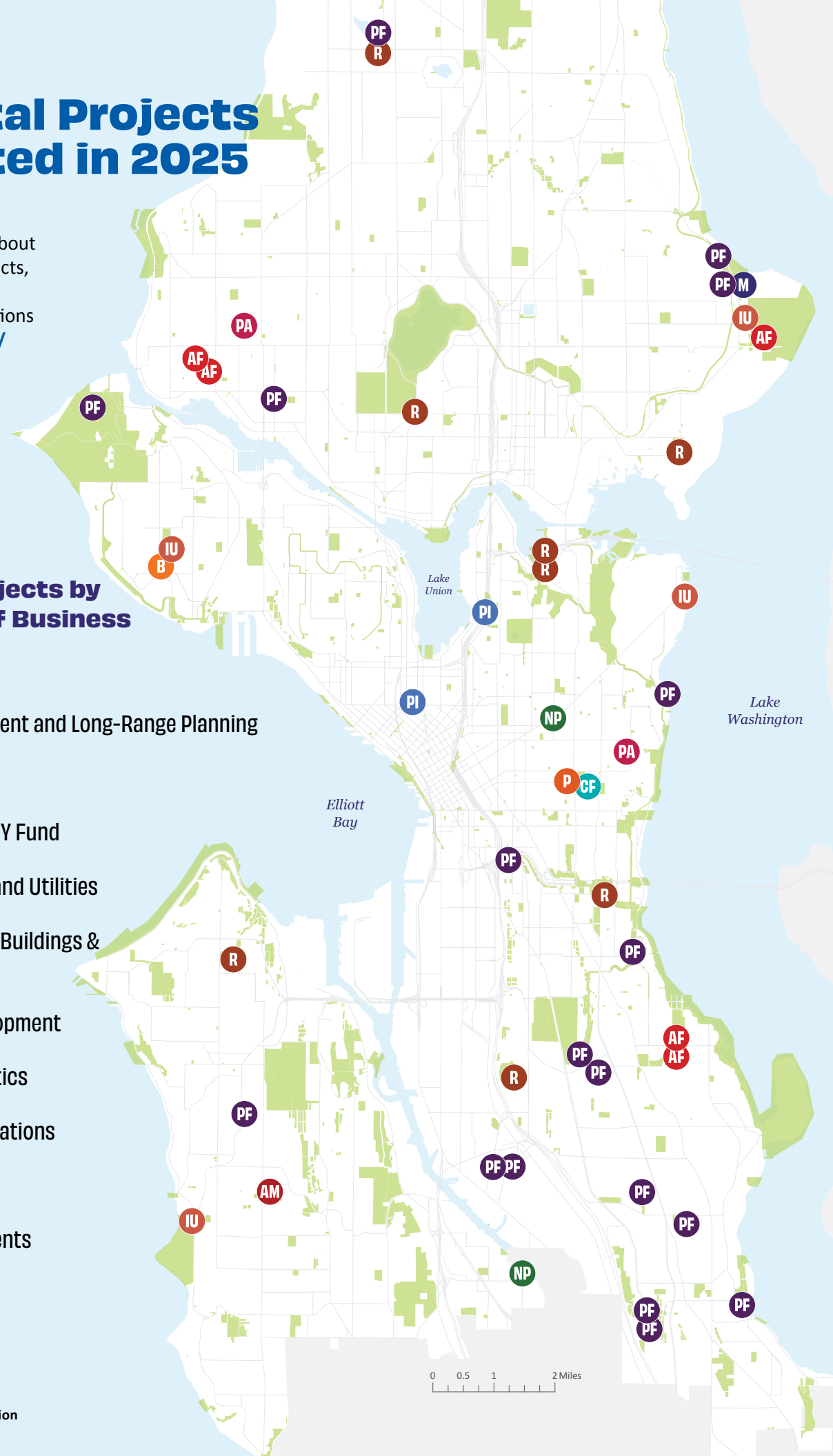
56 Capital Projects Completed in 2025

For more information about completed capital projects, check out our Cycle 2 Capital Project Completions Map: maps.seattle.gov/SPRCycle2Completions



Completed Projects by Detailed Line of Business

- AF** Athletic Fields
- AM** Asset Management and Long-Range Planning
- B** Buildings
- CF** Park CommUNITY Fund
- IU** Infrastructure and Utilities
- M** Magnuson Park Buildings & Infrastructure
- NP** New Park Development
- P** Pools and Aquatics
- PA** Play Area Renovations
- PF** Park Features
- PI** Park Improvements
- R** Restrooms



Acknowledgements

Deep gratitude to all SPR employees for their hard work for the community. Special thanks to the following people for their contribution that made this Annual Report possible.

Program Staff and Subject Matter Experts

- Carol Baxter
- Erik Bell
- Sherrie Belt
- Ben Burtzos
- Craig Chatburn
- Lisa Ciecko
- Darryl Cook
- Connor Durham
- Sai Fang
- Kathleen Gantz
- David Graves
- Monica Haugen
- Paula Hoff
- Joy House
- Junior Kitonia
- Clint Karlsen
- Susan Lee
- Janice Liang
- Malaya Neri
- Lisa Neilsen
- Karen O'Connor
- Joanne Orsucci
- Jen Romo
- Katie Sifford
- Mike Schwindeller
- Giovannina Souers
- Mike Wallace
- Johnnie Williams
- Jason Vining-Nakamura
- Abishek Zeley

Writing, Editing, Strategizing

- Todd Burley
- Samantha Burton
- Christina Hirsch
- Brian Judd
- Kacey Smith
- Amy Williams

Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners —

- Performance Oversight Subcommittee
- Ryan Baum
- John Flinn
- Tricia Diamond
- Phillip Meng

Design

- Blank Space, LLC

Primary Author and Project Manager

- Justin Hellier

Data Integrity

- Oliver Bazinet
- Waslala Miranda
- Corey Myers
- Thavy Pen
- Ching Sam
- Dena Schuler



Thank you to Christopher Williams

In 2025, SPR also said goodbye to longtime leader Christopher Williams. While he was officially the Deputy Superintendent, he took on the role of Interim Superintendent four separate times for a total of 8 years. Born in Seattle, Christopher attended Columbia University and travelled the world as a US Marine. He was pivotal to efforts such as banning smoking in our parks and establishing the Seattle Park District. In honor of his 33 years of service to the City, the Mayor and City Council declared October 9, 2025, to be Christopher Williams Day!

This Concludes our Annual Report for 2025!

For even more information please see the [Financial and Performance Appendix](#), for a comprehensive set of budget-to-actuals and key performance indicators on our entire operation. We are grateful to work with other key accountability partners, including the Seattle City Council, the Park District Board, the Office of City Auditor, and the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners.

Success in our work depends on authentic, two-way communication with our primary partner: you! We invite you to join us in shaping the future of Seattle's park and recreation system by sharing your thoughts, ideas, and experiences. Your feedback and engagement are crucial in helping us improve our programs and services for the community. We encourage everyone to get up-to-date information on our [website](#) and [blog](#), or by signing up for our [e-newsletter](#). Please follow and engage with us online through our [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#), and [LinkedIn](#) pages, and share any parks and recreation-related questions, concerns, or feedback by emailing PKS_Info@seattle.gov. Community members can also report park maintenance issues to the City of Seattle through the [Find It, Fix It app](#).

A Look Ahead

Instead of a standard annual report, in 2027 SPR will release a Mid-Cycle Evaluation, a more comprehensive look at how well we are meeting our strategic commitments, celebrate our accomplishments after four years of Cycle 2, and identify lessons to inform Cycle 3 planning.



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