



MEMORANDUM

Date: November 2, 2016
To: Board of Park Commissioners
From: Susanne Rockwell
Subject: 2017 Development Plan and Gap Update

Requested Board Action

This briefing paper provides an overview of Seattle Parks and Recreation's (SPR) 2017 Development Plan and Gap Analysis Update, the Plan's relationship to Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan, proposed changes and public engagement process.

No action from the Board is requested at the November 10 meeting; timing for a Board recommendation is expected to be at the end of first quarter, 2017, following a public hearing and prior to City Council adoption via a resolution.

Project or Policy Description and Background

1. This briefing paper focuses on outlining the Development Plan background and highlighting related policy issues.
2. The presentation on November 10, 2016 will focus on showcasing the mapping technology which will be used to inform SPR's long-term acquisition strategy as contained within the Plan.

The Development Plan is a 6-year plan that documents and describes SPR's facilities and lands, looks at Seattle's changing demographics and lays out a vision for the future. The Development Plan is required by the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) to maintain the City of Seattle's eligibility for state grants that will help realize outdoor recreation development and open space acquisition projects; as such the Development Plan needs approval by the Superintendent and must be adopted by City Council. The Development Plan and Gap Analysis Plan were originally created in 2000 and 2001 respectively, in response to the State's Growth Management Act (GMA) and the City's first GMA Comprehensive Plan.

The 2017 Development Plan will replace the 2011 edition, and while both documents (Plan and Gap) were updated in 2006 and 2011, the metrics and mapping analysis have not changed over the 17 intervening years. With the 2017 update, SPR is proposing revised metrics and a new mapping approach.

Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan and the Parks Element within that plan, contain overarching goals and polices that guide SPR, whereas the 2017 Development Plan takes these a step further and help to define SPR's future acquisition priorities and capital investments in keeping with those policies. The Gap Analysis is a part of the 2017 Development Plan and uses Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping

technology to illustrate SPR's and the City's open space and recreational facilities, and as a tool to help inform SPR's long-term acquisition strategy.

The City has made a commitment to be carbon neutral by 2050. A goal in the Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan is to consider access to our parks by transit, bicycle, and on foot when acquiring, siting and designing new park facilities or improving existing ones. This is an opportunity to ensure that all of our residents have access to a range of facilities and programming, while also serving as an interconnected system that serves the broader city through our community centers, pools, parks, trails, other facilities and open space.

The desire is for this plan to be more visionary and usable for future planning, and looks at city resources from the lens of accessibility and equity. We will be using equity and population density mapping, as one of many tools, to help us formulate our priority areas for future acquisition. The intent is to gain a more accurate picture of access, by measuring how people walk to a park or facility. We are calling this "walkability".

Relevant Goals and Policies

The 2017 Development Plan will have goals and objectives that are consistent with related goals and policies in the Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan, the Parks Legacy Plan, and some that will carry over from the 2011 Development Plan. There are currently:

- 5 goals and 24 objectives in the 2011 Development Plan,
- approximately 46 goals in the Parks Legacy Plan, and
- 4 goals and approximately 42 policies in the Parks Element of the Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan.

Please see **Attachment A – Policy Comparison Matrix** for more detailed information on the various goals and policies.

SPR's anticipated outcomes are to:

1. Have an approach to open space and recreation facility distribution that is based upon access, opportunity, equity, and real time data.
2. Have a user friendly data interface that the public can access via story mapping and other new technologies.
3. Maintain a baseline level of service for citywide open space.
4. Have refined long-term strategies that look to acquire more land to add to the park network over time, and to increase the capacity of existing facilities to allow expanded use (e.g., converting grass fields to synthetic turf fields or adding a walking path in a park), where feasible.

Public Involvement Process

The City has a new public involvement procedure where the Department of Neighborhoods (DON) coordinates all public meetings. SPR participates with DON and other city departments in these meetings. Below is the anticipated public meeting schedule – please refer to the project webpage: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/about-us/policies-and-plans/2017-development-plan> for the most up-to-date schedule, locations and times.

Citywide Meetings -

1. Dec 3 - Bitter Lake Community Center
2. Dec 7 – West Seattle
3. Dec 14 – University District

4. Jan 10 – First Hill/Capitol Hill
5. Jan 21 – Columbia City

Key Issues

We will be discussing key questions and issues with the public over the next few months and will be coming back to the Park Board with staff recommendations. The recommendations will be based on public input, legal requirements and alignment with the Mayor’s vision for Seattle. Anticipated key questions and issues include the following:

1. *Determining what the appropriate Citywide Level of Service should be given the constraints of the built environment in a growing city.*

SPR manages a 6,410-acre park system; with the system comprising about 11% of the City’s land area. In 2016 Seattle’s population was 686,800 and it is expected to grow by over 120,000 new residents over the next 20 years. After the public engagement process, SPR will return to the Board with a recommendation for level of service metrics to include in the Development Plan.

2. *SPR is considering developing a new metric for open space goals, replacing the population-based open space goals for individual Urban Villages, and adding a Long-Term Acquisition Strategy.*

Parks, open space, recreation facilities, and programs contribute to Seattle’s physical, mental, and environmental health, and support the City’s economic vitality. While Seattle has a robust park system, our acquisition program is important to the sustainability, vitality and quality of life for city residents. Property acquisition is opportunity driven, but the gap areas identified in our analysis could help define SPR’s priorities and needs for future acquisition and development projects.

These goals are not necessarily an accurate reflection of greater accessibility, which SPR believes is an important metric for SPR’s long-term acquisition strategy. For example, in Urban Villages such as Northgate, Ballard, South Park, Westwood-Highland, North Rainier and many more, the population based goals indicated that there was sufficient open space, but when we look at it from the standpoint of access, we still have large gaps in service. Using access as a metric may provide a more realistic understanding of where our open space gaps are and best inform our acquisition strategy.

3. *Is shifting from a buffer approach to a network approach, based upon walkability and access a better model for informing SPR’s long-term acquisition strategies?*

SPR proposes to use walkability to evaluate how people access park facilities, in particular by measuring the distance people need to walk within an urban village to get to a park entrance. Walkability as defined by Trust for Public Lands (TPL), National Park Service (NPS) and many major cities, to be a 10-minute walk or approximately ½ mile. TPL and NPS suggest using a 10-minute walk time as the national standard. Over 1,000 park entry points were mapped and linked to SDOT’s walking network layer to develop the walkability areas. This walking network takes into account the street grid, major intersections, key pedestrian and bicycle routes.

SPR is considering new guidelines for measuring how people access park facilities and as a guide when developing the Long-Term Acquisition Strategy:

- a. 5-minute walkability guideline - Within Urban Villages

- b. 10-minute walkability guideline - Outside of Urban Villages
4. *The Gap Analysis also considers population density and levels of income, as well as other publically accessible land, such as Major Institutions and Universities, Seattle Public School property and Port property. Are there other factors that should be taken into consideration?*

This last question is fairly open ended. The bulk of the staff presentation and story mapping will focus on key issues.

Budget

Planning costs for the Plan update come out of the Planning and Development Division’s operating budget. Capital Improvement Projects and Acquisitions are funded through the CIP (Real Estate Excise Taxes-REET) and Seattle Park District funding. The current acquisition budget in the Seattle Park District’s current six-year financial plan is \$2 Million annually.

Project Schedule

Nov 10, 2016	Initial briefing and roll out to the Board of Park Commissioners
Nov, 2016 – Jan, 2017	Public Engagement – participating with DON’s Citywide Public meetings, focus groups, other partners and City Departments
Dec 8, 2016	Planning Commission briefing
March, 2017	Board of Park Commissioners Public Hearing
March-June 2017	Finalize Plan
May-June 2017	Draft Legislation and SEPA review
September 2017	City Council Approval (Resolution)
October 2017	Submit to the State

Additional Information

Susanne Rockwell, Project Manager
susanne.rockwell@seattle.gov or 206.684.7133

Project Information can be found at:

Story Mapping link: http://www.seattle.gov/ArcGIS/SMSeries_GapAnalysisUpdate2017/index.html

Project webpage: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/about-us/policies-and-plans/2017-development-plan>

For Comments and Questions, please e-mail:

2017DevPlan@seattle.gov

Attachment A: Policy Comparison Matrix