



Minutes|Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners

100 Dexter Ave N/Kenneth R. Bounds Boardroom

Remote accessibility via Zoom

Thursday, June 13, 2024

6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Attendance

Present: Steve Lerer, John Flinn, Ryan Baum, Joshua Seyfried, Stafford Mays, Amy Brockhaus (co-chair), Justin Umagat (co-chair), Phillip Meng, Lauren Lanham, Pasqual Contreras, Whitney Nakamura, Tricia Diamond

Absent: [None]

SPR Staff and Presenters: AP Diaz, Craig Chatburn, Travis Buell, Paula Hoff, Ben Burtzos

Welcome, Introductions & Land Acknowledgement

Brockhaus calls the meeting to order at 6:30 pm and provides logistical instructions for in-person and remote attendees.

Brockhaus reads the land acknowledgement.

Seattle Parks and Recreation acknowledges and affirms the Indigenous Coast Salish people as the original caretakers of our waters and landscape, who nurtured and shaped today's parkland. We honor their legacy with gratitude and appreciation and will safeguard their knowledge and stewardship as enduring treasures to promote community welfare, cultivate inclusive expressions of nature and recreation and commit to land acknowledgment for each ensuing generation.

Commissioners and SPR staff introduce themselves around the table.

Brockhaus introduces the consent item for approval: meeting minutes from the 4/25/24 BPRC meeting, and tonight's meeting agenda. Mays moves to approve both items; Umagat seconds. The motion passes by unanimous consent.

Adopted: 4/25/24 BPRC Meeting Minutes

Adopted: 6/13/24 BPRC Meeting Agenda

Public Comment

Peter Breyfogle – Hello, my name is Peter Breyfogle, I am a homeowner in Seattle District 4. I am a member of a front-line community of self-activated senior citizens that regularly use the Burke-Gilman Trail for fun and fitness. We are doing our part to stay healthy and active and deserve to be provided with a safe trail. I couldn't help noticing how much nicer some of the trails are around west Lake Union. The work done over the last two years is really appreciated! It's done a lot to make our rides safer and more comfortable. I don't say, "Welcome to Sea-Rattle!" as I come into north Seattle on the north end of the trail. However, more needs to be done. The last two years have only covered half of the

areas we reported using Find It/Fix It in October of 2022. And even in the sections where work was done, parts are skipped that should've probably been fixed, they were just patched. There were a lot of reports put in at the same time for the area west of 40th Ave NE and there are problems along the way down to Gasworks Park, along with what else. It's not an exclusive reporting of the problems on the Burke-Gilman Trail. You don't patch artificial turf athletic field; you replace the whole field. The patching process is analogous on the trail; the patches leave gaps, and cause problems. The Burke-Gilman Trail is 46 years old, and a lot of it is original, and not in very good shape. I have created CommUNITY fund project suggestions for the Burke-Gilman Trail to address safety and accessibility issues by Matthew's Beach and centered under the Princeton Bridge where the trail splits in half, the top half narrow, and in bad shape, and the bottom half is used for two-way traffic. I hope these are given a fair hearing as far as where to find additional funding for the Burke-Gilman Trail; we've been told there's only \$350,000 a year to fix the trail, that works out to less than a mile a year of the patching process, so it's not enough. I welcome the new members to the board and encourage you to review previous public comments [I have made] over the past year or so. I personally invite any of you, any staff members, AP Diaz specifically, to come and check out the Burke-Gilman Trail, take a ride with us like he checked out pickleball; it's a very famous facility, it's one of the first bike trails, rail-trail conversions in the United States. Thank you.

Mike Showalter – I'm here, I'm Mike Showalter, I live in the Maple Leaf neighborhood of Seattle, right near Maple Leaf Park. I'm here on behalf of an effort to rename the baseball fields there after Will Stacey. Early on our efforts to get the Maple Leaf ballfields renamed after Will, who was a young US Marine from Seattle, died in Afghanistan in 2012, someone told us that good people die every day. In other words, maybe don't get your hopes up about renaming the fields. That statement has stuck with me all this time, all these months since we've been working on this, because the fact is, it's not really wrong. Good people do die every day, and it's also a fact that most people are good people. Every March, a few thousand good people show up at baseball fields all across Seattle to kick off the Little League season, including at Maple Leaf Park. Will Stacey and his family were some of those good people. T-ball, coach pitch, minors, majors, juniors, seniors; year after year, one volunteer coach or another was pencilling Will's name into the lineup. His parents were there [indistinguishable]. This field naming proposal we submitted for consideration is brought to you with support, especially from those involved with the primary sport use of the fields, which is youth baseball and softball. From February all the way up through July, it's filled every single day. Those fields have been home to Roosevelt/University/Green Lake Little League, also known as RUG, for more than 50 years, through which hundreds of kids play baseball and softball every year. I think this year the count is nearly 600. The proposal details the direct positive impact that Will had on his friends, teammates, and fellow Marines, at least one of whom will speak here tonight. "Character, courage, and loyalty" is the Little League motto. Will lived those ideals throughout his short life, and those fields are where they were nurtured, and where the good people who show up each March aspire to the same ideals for themselves and their children. We respectfully ask the naming committee consider granting this request to honor Will, and his legacy of service. Thank you.

Jordan Houghton – I am Dr. Jordan Houghton, I am the assistant director of the Office of Student Veteran Life at the University of Washington, and also the founding commander for the William C. Stacey American Legion Post #206. I did not get to personally know Will; thankfully, you will hear from Max Bernstein tonight, who was his Lieutenant overseas. But I knew his mother and his father

quite well. While I was an undergraduate at the University of Washington, I got to hear Will's story when I spoke with Bob Stacey, as he was the Dean of Arts & Sciences. He is the singular reason for why my office exists at the University of Washington, and Will was a large part of that, as well. He was a connective tissue for myself and Bob, and he has lived on through his ideals. Again, as not having ever met Will, I just get to learn of him from his friends, his family, the folks that he served with, and it's a privilege. Will is somebody that can't be replicated. So our post, the American Legion post, works to try and have that idealism that Will was known for. Just as we heard from Mike, those characteristics that define him that he carried on all the way from RUG Little League into the Marine Corps, becoming one of the youngest Sergeants in the Marine Corps, and just, the things he did while he was over there. His impact was so powerful that, after his passing and, at the behest of his family, RUG Little League was able to fundraise over \$45,000 in Will's name following his death. This gained national and international attention for his "In case of death" letter, which, if you're not familiar with what that is, it's something that people that deploy write, just in case of death, so that their family has at least some last words from them. But we're here because it's been an initiative that we've been working on for near a decade at this point. Will passed in 2012, and I don't think there's a reason to not do this. He was massive at Roosevelt High School, he was an all-star all the way throughout, and I think it's the appropriate thing to do. So if any of you have questions, I implore you to reach out to any of the folks that are listed in our proposal. Thank you for your time.

Nancy Breyfogle – I'm Nancy Breyfogle, city of Seattle citizen, homeowner, and I love the Burke-Gilman Trail. It's one of the reasons I moved here, and it is one of the most famous rails-trails parks that we have in the country. Burke Gilman Trail is heavily used. I rode down here today on it. It is heavily used! Out citizens love this trail. It is multi-use; we saw every kind of vehicle on wheels, and people walking, and dogs, and everything else. It is park of the King County regional trails system; it occupies an abandoned rail corridor, a unique spot in the City. The Burke Gilman Trail runs along the Fremont Cut, Lake Union, through the University of Washington campus; after you pass through the University Village shopping center, the trail heads up through the northeast neighborhoods, alongside Hawthorne Hills, Laurelhurst, Windermere neighborhoods, through Sand Point neighborhood, passing Magnuson Park, and then alongside Lake Washington just before you get to Matthews Beach, continuing on to Lake Forest Park, Kenmore, and Bothell. The trail throughout is nearly level, a unique thing to be able to bike in this city on a level surface. And there's very few intersections, so this makes for a very pleasant bike ride. Beautiful scenery, people using it for all kinds of multi-purpose good recreation. This trail is an important part of Seattle. Rails to trails are a part of history. This trail needs to be kept in good condition. It needs to be safe and pleasant so that you can enjoy views, and not be just having to watch and watch for the bumps and everything else that can go wrong. It has been somewhat maintained, but it has really been neglected. It's old. You drive through here and [timer sounds]. So, please make it a priority for capital projects and proper maintenance. Thank you.

Carrie Christensen – I just wanted to make some comments about Denny Blaine Park. I know there's been a lot of talk and meetings about what's going on in this park. I work in the neighborhood; I've worked there for six years. The things I have seen in that park, uh, since COVID, shouldn't be happening anywhere, let alone a City park. The park codes are not currently being enforced by either Park rangers or SPD. The park users are not self-regulating, and I would like to know what the Parks Department plans on doing if enforcement does not work. The parking situation in that neighborhood

on any sunny day is insane. On Saturday, there were nine cars in the red zone; Sunday, there were, at 3:32 pm there were 15 cars in a red zone; by 5:30 pm there were 17 cars in a red zone, which is a towaway zone, no parking. So, people who are using that park don't seem to care about the rules, whether it's parking, drinking, smoking, no drugs, et cetera. I understand being nude is legal; I have seen lewd acts; I have seen masturbation; I've found needles; so on and so forth. So, I know this park is at the forefront for the Parks Department- [timer sounds] [Hoff and Burtzos remind Christensen to conclude comments] Just, the Friends of Denny Blaine make it sound like a cute little naked beach park, and there are some dark, dark undertones at this park. Thank you.

Max Bernstein – Hi everyone, I am Max Bernstein, I live in northeast Seattle, I was Will's platoon commander and good friend and I appreciate the time to speak tonight. Quite frankly, I'm here representing those lucky enough to have known or served with Will to ask you to approve the proposal to name the fields after him. As I said in my letter, to me and to the hundreds of people whose lives have been irrevocably changed for the better by Will, there could be no more fitting tribute. Will grew up on those fields. Those were his first lessons in teamwork and camaraderie, hard work and humility; lessons he would pass on to many, including myself. Will was my Marine. And "my Marine" is a bit of a laughable term when you consider that by the time I was his platoon commander, he had been on four deployments, while I had just graduated college. So yes, I was his platoon commander, but what I learned from him, and what all of our Marines learned from him, not only saved our lives, but enriched them. He was the consummate coach; a leader who was devoted to his craft, and to the development of others. He stayed up late into the night thinking about how to make us better, what training we needed, what strategies we could employ. And unlike what I'm sure some of your stereotypical images are of a Marine, he was not a vociferous taskmaster. This man was a cerebral strategist, more John Wooden than George Patton. He trained hand-in-hand with his Marines; he crawled in the dirt with them, he built their skills and their confidence. As you heard, Will was killed in Afghanistan on January 31, 2012, and for his heroic actions on that day and throughout his service he was awarded the Bronze Star with V for valor. I was with Will that day, and what no award can encapsulate, however, is the ripple effect his life had on others. All of his Marines made it back from that deployment. I see the husbands and fathers they have become, the children that have been named after him, my own son included, and I see Will. I read the letters from the next generation of Marines he has inspired and I hear Will, and I see the love and kinship between those of us who knew him, and I feel Will. I hope that these fields will be named after him so that more people will be moved to goodness and growth by his story, and that way he gets to keep coaching and to stay connected to the game he loved so much, the place he loved so much, and the game that brought him so much joy. In closing, I just want to leave you with Will's own words from his "In case of death" letter. He said, "My death did not change the world. It may be tough for you to justify the meaning of it all, but there is a greater meaning to it. There will be a child who will live because people left the security they enjoyed in their home to come to his, and this child will learn in new schools that have been built. He will pursue every opportunity their heart could desire. They will have the gift of freedom, which I have enjoyed for so long. If my life buys the safety of a child who will one day change the world, then that will have been worth it." Will did change the world. He changed my world, and for him, it all started at these ballfields. It would be an honor to see Will's name adorn a place where so many little girls and boys will feel safe, will find joy, will learn about teamwork and camaraderie. What a fitting legacy to a person who devoted his life to those principles. Thank you so much for your time.

Bob Kutter – Hi, Bob Kutter, District 4. First, I want to thank you guys for the work that has been done on the Burke Gilman. But as you've heard from various speakers, a lot more needs to be done. My family, we have—my son-in-law uses it for commuting, my son is a very avid cyclist, who uses it quite frequently; I started cycling about three years ago, and pretty much every ride either begins or ends on the Burke Gilman, or the entire route is the Burke Gilman. My wife is looking at buying a bike so she can join us, and I'd like to have as safe a surface as possible for my wife. I also volunteer with 350 Seattle and Climate Action Families; climate change is at the forefront of what I work against, and to get to neutral carbon levels, we're going to have to encourage more people to bike. We just can't have the cars on the highways. So please, [indistinguishable]. Thank you.

Eric Van Aelstyn – Hi, thank you for having me, my name is Eric Van Aelstyn. I'm a current Ballard resident but I grew up in the Maple Leaf community. I'm here in support of the proposal to rename the Maple Leaf Park ballfields to the Will Stacey Ballfields in Maple Leaf Park in honor of my old Little League teammate, Will Stacey. Will represented what we hope all younger generations playing ball will be. He was a charismatic, joyful presence on the diamond, a supportive team player, and a born leader that led by example. And I can speak directly to this. Will and I grew up playing together in RUG Little League, often on the same team. On the field, he was a gifted ballplayer, and was someone I was always in awe of, and I'll admit that sometimes a little bit jealous of for his natural ability playing baseball. But more importantly than being a gifted player, Will always put in the work, even at a young age, to develop his skills and support his team, setting a profound example for all of us to follow so that we could become better ourselves. That same presence and leadership extended past his baseball career and into his service as a Marine, as Max and others have already commented on. He exemplified how building developing the intangibles—leadership, empathy, perseverance—translates to success in whatever one may choose to do. Recently, we celebrated the 20th anniversary of a RUG All-Star Team winning Districts, a team that both Will and I were on. We shared many memories, and many of our teammates traveled to join the celebration, but we all knew who was missing. That was Will. I know we all would have loved to have caught up with Will, to see the man he would have been today; a man who lived his life fearlessly, and always in the service of others. So we ask for your support tonight to rename the Maple Leaf ballfields to the Will Stacey Fields at Maple Leaf. Not just to honor him as a cornerstone of the Little League community, and as a Marine who gave his life to [protect] others, but also so that future generations can learn from his legacy, and live live fully and with compassion, just like Will. Thank you for your consideration.

[Sherri Field] – Thank you for the opportunity to comment, my name is Sherri Field [sp?], and I too am part of the frontline senior citizen community that uses Burke Gilman and other trails for recreation and transportation, and I'm also a regular volunteer with Cascade Bike Club's Pedaling Relief project, where we assist our local food banks with food rescue and grocery delivery to clients by bicycle. We use bicycle trailers and cargo bikes, so we really appreciate trails that are wide and smooth enough, free of sharp, blind turns and other obstacles, like railroad tracks, that make it difficult to maneuver without tipping our load or experiencing close calls with other trail users. Thank you also for maintaining vegetation and debris, especially in the rainy seasons, [indistinguishable]. I understand that the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners has a 15-member community advisory board, and there are still currently vacancies. Please let us know how we can help encourage the City Council and Mayor to fill those vacancies as soon as possible. The more input from the many different users of our parks and trails, the better we are all served. People like Peter Breyfogle here, who, as

you can see, has the ability to bring a cross-section of the cycling community together, would be a great addition to the community advisory board, and I think District 4 still has a vacancy, so. Thank you.

Alex Breyfogle – I live in Greenwood. The Burke Gilman Trail and also all the trail systems is really in my view a really integral part of the parks. It connects so many parks and everything, from like, Golden Gardens, Gasworks, Magnuson, and connects you all the way to parks in like, the rest of King County. It's also really important for commuting. I'm trying to drive less for work, and, you know, I work in Fremont. Using the Burke Gilman is one of the best ways to get there. There are parts that are, let's say, not the smoothest, a little rough, especially around the missing link section, and I would just like to really say, to not neglect the trail. This is one of the great trails, it's really central to the Parks system, and it's a really wonderful park in and of itself. Thanks for all you've done, and please do more.

Diaz replies to public comment, first thanking in-person commenters for coming to the meeting. In response to comments about the Burke Gilman Trail, Diaz agrees to accompany commenters on a ridealong in the future, and notes that the upcoming transportation levy, if and when passed by Council, will have money set aside for trail maintenance. Diaz also notes that King County is in the midst of a separate levy discussion, which is currently in an open public comment period. Diaz also thanks everyone who spoke regarding the proposal to rename the Maple Leaf ballfields in honor of Will Stacey, and particularly thanks Bernstein and Houghton as well for their service. The proposal will be considered by the Parks Naming Committee. Diaz voices his appreciation for the presentations about Stacey and the proposals, and assures the speakers that the committee will act with briskness and care. Finally, Diaz clarifies that SPR has helped establish a Friends of Denny Blaine Park group to help establish positive use practices and how best to maintain collaboration and cooperation among neighbors and park users, and is working closely with Parking Enforcement to address parking issues.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Diaz delivers the report.

Healing Garden: On Friday, June 7 the day after the tragic shooting at Garfield High School, SPR hosted an event for the kick-off of the healing garden at Martin Luther King Jr. Park. In partnership with Clean Greens Farm & Market, the Black Agriculture Leadership Council, and the NAACP, Seattle Parks and Recreation is collaborating with the community to envision healing gardens and enhanced park spaces in Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Park and Amy Yee Tennis Center campus that promote solidarity, strengthens community resilience, and support healthy and sustainable living. This project sets out to uplift and commemorate lives lost to gun violence and its impact on families and communities in Seattle.

During the Black Lives Matter and CHOP/CHAZ protest in the summer of 2020, a garden was developed by the community in Cal Anderson Park. The garden was deemed the "Black Lives Matter Memorial Garden" and existed until late 2023. Seattle Parks and Recreation removed the temporary garden in December 2023 due to conflicting use of the space historically used to host large events, public health concerns, public safety issues, and the need for maintenance. Since 2020, SPR has conducted community engagement with park visitors, neighbors, and adjacent small businesses

related to the garden area. SPR received significant feedback demonstrating a desire to relocate the garden. In the spring of 2024, community stakeholders were gathered to engage the broader community to help plan a new garden in the Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial Park and Amy Yee Tennis Center campus to replace the Black Lives Matter Memorial Garden.

Seattle Has 6th Best Park System in U.S.: I'm pleased to announce that Seattle is ranked 6th in the Trust for Public Lands' ParkScore Index for 2024, up from 8th place last year! The index ranks the 100 most populous cities in the country on a number of parks and recreation criteria. We were ranked 11th in 2019, 9th in 2021, and then 8th in 2023. Points were awarded for five characteristics of an effective park system: access, investment, acreage, amenities and equity.

Largest Mural in North America: I was honored to join the Mayor and UN officials on June 5 to announce the completion of several magnificent murals that now cover the concrete exteriors of three buildings on Elliott Way facing Pike Place Market near the Waterfront. Together, the paintings comprise the largest exterior mural in North America. The murals were painted in celebration of World Environment Day and the designation of the City of Seattle as a Generation Restoration "Role Model City" by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Seattle Parks and Recreation is the lead department in the City's participation in Generation Restoration and Seattle is the only Role Model City in the U.S. The initiative seeks to amplify the importance of cities in preserving biodiversity.

Green Flag Award: SPR is pleased to announce that we are the first municipal park system in the country to receive the Green Flag Award, an international award for park excellence, for Seward Park. This award looked at planning, operations, sustainable management, community engagement, and many other factors. A management plan was created to gather comprehensive information about the park and identify areas for improvement over the coming years. Then Green Flag judges made a site visit to assess the park on the ground. Seward Park received high marks! We plan to announce this award tomorrow, on Flag Day. Special thanks to the Friends of Seward Park and the Seward Park Audubon Center for their support of the park and the Green Flag Award process. And also to our amazing staff that steward Seward so well.

Pilot Project to shorten beach hours: Beginning May 24, SPR started a pilot project to shorten the hours at Golden Gardens and Alki Beach during the 2024 summer months to address dangerous and/or illegal behavior that has been typical of summer evenings at these two parks. Under this pilot program the beach hours at these two parks will be 4 a.m. – 10:30 p.m. from May 24 – September 22. After September 22, the hours will be 4:00 a.m. – 11:30 p.m. Fire pits at Golden Gardens and Alki have been unlocked between 4-5 p.m. starting May 24. This program is a pilot and will be reviewed at a Board of Parks and Recreation Commission meeting after the pilot is complete.

Denny Blaine Guidelines: We want to let you know we've decided not to adopt supplemental use guidelines for Denny Blaine Park. Through the community engagement process it became clear that the suggested guidelines were already covered under existing Parks Code. We appreciate all members of the community for providing feedback and heartfelt thoughts about Denny Blaine Park—our parks system is made better by the engagement and advocacy of residents and users. While this process will not result in supplemental use guidelines for Denny Blaine Park, we would like to share several accomplishments that we will build on moving forward:

- We recognized the Friends of Denny Blaine Park through a formal agreement. This queer-led group, including park users of all walks of life and clothing-level choices, has served an important role in advocating for specific park improvements that park users would like to see.
- We brought together the leadership of the Friends of Denny Blaine with a small group of neighbors to begin to build relationships, learn from each other's experience, and identify collaborative solutions.
- We are also on track for some larger-scale improvements on the site in the near future.

Greater and Greener Conference: We are one week away from hosting the international Greater & Greener Conference, which will be held from June 21-25. We are working with the City Park Alliance and this is the first time ever the conference has sold out. We expect more than 1,100 parks and recreation professionals from around the country and abroad to attend. We are planning Weekend Tours in and around Seattle on the Saturday and Sunday before the conference and then a very full schedule of presentations, events and workshops on Monday and Tuesday. Thanks to those Board members who are participating or volunteering!

A few highlights from our Parks & Environment Division.

Storm cleanup: Our tree crew was busy in the days after the windy weather in early June. Pictured here [photo shown] is the Tree Crew cutting up a fallen tree at Queen Anne Community Center.

Spring Tree Planting Season is a wrap. Our Tree Crew finished the Spring tree planting season with a record 508 trees planted.

The **Trails Crew** always does excellent work. Pictured here [photo shown] is a resurfaced trail at Discovery Park off Kansas Avenue; the trailhead had become eroded.

Jefferson Greenhouse

I wanted to shine a light on some of the department's unsung heroes who work at our Jefferson Greenhouse on Beacon Hill.

Jefferson Greenhouse is an amazing and beautiful place: It's a resource center, a distribution hub, and a regional leader in superior plant production. The Greenhouse provides plants for our parks and greenspaces and helps support urban food programs. Greenhouse staff work with District Gardeners, Specialty Gardens, the Landscape Crew, Green Seattle Partnership, the Natural Area Crew, and other community organizations.

The Greenhouse has also fostered a long partnership with the Beacon Hill Food Forest, providing guidance for the expansion of their BIPOC Garden, as well as training volunteers in propagation and plant care. The Food Forest is open to the community and allows visitors to pick their own produce, but also provides fresh vegetables to the Beacon Hill Food Bank.

The Greenhouse also provided vegetable starts to the White Center Food Bank, and Garfield Community Center.

The Greenhouse grows approximately 60,000 plants a year – grown from seeds, roots or cuttings. These include 20,000 native plants that go to the Green Seattle Partnership for planting in our forests and natural areas each fall. The plants include:

- Native plants: 21,000
- Summer annuals: 27,000
- Perennials: 3,000
- Vegetable starts: 3,000
- Winter annuals: 8,000

And they do all of this incredible work with just 3 staff members!! They include Johan Schorer, Greenhouse Supervisor; Keri Frattini, Gardener; and Lydia Abernethy, Seasonal Gardener.

Recreation Division

Summer Aquatics: Summer is approaching and we are ready with a full Aquatics schedule starting on June 22:

- Outdoor Pools: Our 2 outdoor pools, Mounger Pool in Magnolia and Colman Pool in Lincoln Park opened for the weekend on May 25 and will open full-time on Sat., June 22.
- Lifeguarded Beaches: Two life-guarded beaches at Madrona and West Green Lake opened on weekends on May 15. The regular summer season will open full-time on Saturday, June 22, at Madrona, West Green Lake, Matthews, Madison, Seward Park and Pritchard. Free swim lessons are offered at all lifeguarded beaches for kids ages 6 to 16.
- Indoor Pools: SPR indoor pools are open on weekends Saturdays and Sundays until June 22, then they are 7-day operations until the end of Labor Day weekend.
- Wading Pools: our 19 wading pools, located in parks throughout the city, open on June 22 on various days of the week
- Sprayparks: We also have 11 sprayparks that started operation on May 25 and will be open until Labor Day

Discovery Park Summer Beach Shuttle! Two weeks down, 14 more weeks to go! The first two weekends provided shuttle service between the upper parking areas and the beach for nearly 450 park visitors. New this year - we will have staff and/or trained volunteers who ride the shuttle and provide interpretive information about Discovery Park.

Green Schoolyards Launch: On June 4, staff attended the Green Schoolyards Launch event at Emerson Elementary School. This work was the culmination of a cohort of City, School District, and community-based organizations working to bring attention to the need for Green Schoolyards and Outdoor Learning. Seattle Public Schools had received a grant after the pandemic from the National League of Cities and the Cities Connecting Children to Nature Network. The pilot project involved new gardens along with a new cistern. We will be hosting a similar event on Aug. 22, 2024.

Beacon Hill Festival: On June 1, we hosted the annual Beacon Hill Festival with more 3,000 people in attendance and 50 vendors at Jefferson Park! Highlights included a pottery program, painting, gardening, kite making and community entertainment.

Juneteenth closures: Many parks and recreation facilities and programs are closed for the Juneteenth Holiday on June 19th. Please check our website for information.

Diaz shares video of pickleball players at Green Lake courts. SPR has recently designated the East Green Lake courts as a pickleball hub; the Lower Woodland Park courts are a tennis hub. Umagat notes that the previous BPRC meeting included a presentation on pickleball planning.

Some examples of recent work by our highly skilled **Facilities crews!**

Brighton Park restroom: Repair work by our Concrete Crew was completed in response to vandalism at Brighton Park restroom. [Pictured here] is Cody Warner, who has extensive experience in brick masonry.

Othello Park: After a fire damaged the restroom at Othello Park, the Paint Shop restored the building and its mural to their original condition by meticulously addressing the smoke damage caused by the fire.

Ross Playfield Shelter House: The Enhanced Cleaning Maintenance Crew recently completed a deep cleaning and the Ross Playfield Shelter House to prepare for the summer.

Mounger Pool slide: Our expert Paint and Concrete crews renovated the pool slide at Mounger Pool in Magnolia which included a new concrete deck in the area. By working in-house we completed a project that would have cost \$17,000 by a private contractor!

Greater & Greener Volunteer Service Day at T. T. Minor Playgroud Preparations: PCD is leading the charge on getting the T.T. Minor play area space ready for a community build as part of the Greater & Greener Conference's Volunteer Service Day next weekend. T.T. Minor Playground, which includes a children's play area, a sports field, and a jogging/walking path, is a small neighborhood park in a highly dense community. The old equipment has been removed and new equipment is awaiting a full day of a professionally led community play area installation during next week's conference. There will also be other opportunities to help with such as installing plants and general clean up.

Pathways Park Opening Event, Saturday, June 8: The project renovated the Burke-Gilman Playground Park, renamed to Pathways Park, into a nature-based park for people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. The upgrades are in response to community engagement efforts by Eli's Park Project which highlighted the desire for a park that is welcoming and accessible to all abilities. It will be our premier Universally Inclusive Park. The renovation includes improvements to the restroom, parking, pedestrian lighting, stormwater management, irrigation, new plantings, art elements, new play equipment, site furnishings, barbeques, bike racks and more.

Other PCD Highlights:

- **South Park Community Center:** Construction Notice to Proceed was granted for South Park Community Center on May 28. The contractor has mobilized on site and the work is getting underway. This complicated project includes a renovation of the community center and the full site. Construction will last a year.
- **Magnolia Community Center:** Construction will be starting soon.
- **Kubota Gardens Garden Party:** On May 29, a party was held in the garden to celebrate the opening of a much-needed accessible restroom facility! The availability of accessible, gender-neutral bathrooms opens up the 20 acres of history to everyone.

City Council briefings on trees, athletic fields: We have been busy preparing for a couple of briefings for the City Council's Parks, Public Utilities and Technology Committee. The first one was on parks and the urban tree canopy and was presented yesterday, June 12, and was very well received by Councilmembers. On June 26, we will make a presentation on athletic field scheduling and maintenance. The committee meetings begin at 2 p.m. and are streamed online, so please tune in.

Regarding athletic fields, this fall, the department will hold an Athletic Field Summit with the Friends of Athletic Fields and other community constituents. We anticipate asking a couple of Board members to participate in the Summit. If you're interested please let me or Paula know.

2023 SPR Impact Report: This spring, we published our annual Impact Report for 2023 (see graphic on slide) and are currently working on uploading our 2023 financial and performance data actuals to our public-facing dashboard. 2023 was our ramp-up for Cycle 2 of the Seattle Park District with numerous accomplishments as we implemented ongoing programs and launched new initiatives. We are currently finalizing our 2023 annual report which will include more qualitative data and stories. With a publication date of June 2024, this report will be our first annual report to include all fund sources and programs.

Increase in SPR Scholarship Applicants: SPR has seen a substantial increase in scholarship applicants for the first quarter of 2024 compared to the same period last year. With 2,751 total applicants processed, this is a 22% increase!. Of these, 85% (2,347) submitted their application via the new online application.

Underwater cleanup at Seacrest Pier: One of our concessions contractors, Seattle Dive Tours, coordinated with King County's Marine Division, which operates the West Seattle Water Taxi, to conduct a springtime clean up underneath the Seacrest Pier. They collected garbage and debris such as assorted fishing rods & lures, and a discarded scooter.

Upcoming Events

June 15-16 & 22-23 Bicycle Weekends: On scheduled weekends from May to September, a portion of Lake Washington Boulevard is closed to motorized vehicles from 10 a.m. Saturday to 6 p.m. Sunday.

We invite everyone in the community to bike, jog or stroll along the boulevard between the Seward Park entrance and Mount Baker Park's beach during these times and to opt outside for health, recreation and fun!

The remaining 2024 event dates are:

- Saturday, July 13– Sunday, July 14
- Saturday, July 27 – Sunday, July 28
- Saturday, August 10 – Sunday, August 11
- Saturday, August 24– Sunday, August 25
- Saturday, August 31 – Sunday, Sept 1
- Saturday, September 21– Sunday, September 22

June 15 – Mountain Fest at Camp Long: Join us on Saturday, June 15, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at West Seattle’s Camp Long for Mountain Fest, a day of rock climbing, the challenge course, rappelling, environmental education activities and scavenger hunts. This event is free and open to the public.

June 16 – FREE All Gender Recreation Swim at Meadowbrook Pool on Sunday, June 16 from 2-4 p.m. This event is designed to provide a safe swim experience for queer and trans individuals but is open to all.

July 11 - Aug. 15 – Summer Events at the Volunteer Park Amphitheater from 6 to 8:30 p.m. concerts and musical performances. Events are free and open to the public.

Big Day of Play on Aug. 17: SPR’s Big Day of Play returns on August 17th, 12-5 PM, at Rainier Playfield. Big Day of Play is an annual celebration of community, wellness, and fun in Seattle.

Visit our blog parkways.seattle.gov for more info about all of these events.

I’d be glad to answer any questions Board members may have.

Seyfried mentions seeing beach advisories for Golden Gardens and several Lake Washington beaches on the news, as well as the lengthy closure of Matthews beach in 2023. Given this, Seyfried asks for clarity regarding SPR’s beach closure practices. Diaz notes that SPR follows King County’s guidance regarding water safety, bacterial testing, etc. These closures last until the County reports the water is safe again. The other factor continues to be a shortage of lifeguards, which is a nationwide problem. In 2023, SPR was unable to open all of the pool and all of the beaches; this year, all of the pools are open, but staffing is still unavailable for some beaches. Umagat asks about prioritization for this staffing procedure; Diaz clarifies that SPR pools cannot be utilized without full and proper staffing, but the beaches are likely going to be used whether or not lifeguards are present. SPR works to communicate clearly which beaches do and do not have lifeguards present and the risks of swimming in non-guarded areas.

Umagat asks what SPR is doing to help create a “pipeline” of employment in aquatics, specifically mentioning night swim programs for teens which produced a large number of lifeguards in prior years. Diaz mentions an increased recruitment focus on lifeguards of all ages. In addition, SPR is working to communicate the benefits of City employment, with lifeguarding as an excellent entry-level position in the City. Flinn suggests that SPR could also vary training and certification hours to accommodate part-time recruiting and the varied availability that adult (non-teenage) lifeguards may experience. Diaz agrees and adds that the shorter swim season in Seattle exacerbates the problem of condensed training, relative to LA or Miami or other warm-weather cities. Diaz also mentions that SPR is comparing training programs with other municipalities in the region to assure maximum efficacy.

Flinn asks who at SPR is the primary contact and de facto expert on Denny Blaine Park issues. Diaz clarifies that Justin Hellier has been the primary liaison between SPR and Friends of Denny Blaine Park; the new, expanded Ranger team has also been able to take a more active role in monitoring parking, etc., at the park.

Lanham asks if the cost of lifeguard certification is borne by the employee, or by the City. Diaz believes these costs are covered by the City now, though they used to be the responsibility of the employee.

Introduction of New Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners

New members introduce themselves to the Board and staff.

Whitney Nakamura – Boards and Commissions Representative (Seattle Women’s Commission)

Tricia Diamond – Boards and Commissions Representative (Human Rights Commission)

Steve Lerer – At-Large Commissioner

John Flinn – City Council District #3 Commissioner

Ryan Baum – At-Large Commissioner

[For an opportunity to see the new commissioners introduce themselves please visit [the meeting recording](#) on the Seattle Channel website; relevant portion begins approx. 1:16:50]

Park Inspection Program Update

Craig Chatburn, SPR Planning & Development Specialist, and Travis Buell, Deputy Director of Parks & Environment, deliver the presentation.

Chatburn begins by discussing the Volunteer Inspection Program. The volunteer program goal is to ensure safe, welcoming and ecologically functional parks. Its purpose is to get the public’s perspective on our performance. We share with volunteers the outcome of their inspection and track performance for each inspection element in a park, in a district, and across our system. The data help inform decision making and planning.

The program collected data on rating how well we met maintenance goals in the guidebook, and quickly evolved to collect data on comments and suggestions, collected photo documentation of issues, and submitted result to Chatburn to assess and if necessary address reported issues. All data had to be manually entered. These inspections look at 16 different categories, including waste management, restrooms, play areas, and so on.

Our inspectors rate everything on a 1-5 scale, and we convert that into a percentage, which you can see for all categories of inspection citywide and by region here. Meeting close to 80% of expectation with 60% of the staff required to perform the work is worth sharing. But the maintenance goals are what is required to have safe assets that are not in a declining state. The 21% of the standards we are unable to meet are what drives complaints, injuries, premature asset loss, higher replacement costs, and habitat degradation.

Chatburn walks through how his team aggregates comments to determine meaningful action, using play areas as an example.

The volunteer inspection program began in November 2017 and has inspected over 292 parks with trained inspection volunteers, as well as 17 parks with executive staff, board members, such as yourself, council members, and staff. To that end, we are inspecting Carkeek Park from 9:30-11am on Friday, June 21; if you are interested in joining myself and three volunteer inspectors, we are starting at the parking lot near the play area.

Question about lack of quarterly inspections since 2021; Chatburn acknowledges that the pandemic slowed down inspections but that he can't keep blaming Covid, and urges Board members to take him up on the invitation to join him on an inspection.

Since April 2024 inspection can be performed using the Park Inspection Program app. All data submitted in the app is uploaded in real time in a dashboard that can be made publicly available [[Link to dashboard](#); currently available for City employees only]. The data can reveal where a district excels and where to focus training efforts.

How are inspection data/results operationalized?

- Informed design standards for trash and recycle ratio
- Informed crew training on leaf retention tactics
- Inspired the drought vulnerable tree map
- Informed tree protection tactics
- Informed mower operator training
- Informed new employee onboarding training
- Informed pollinator habitat corridor placement

Buell discusses recent evolutions in park inspection procedures, which have devolved inspection responsibilities to different work groups in an effort to get more focused eyes on more parks, more frequently.

The first new type of inspection is the Crew Chief inspection. These are designed to take about an hour, and each park has a frequency assigned by type of park (i.e., quarterly for pocket parks, monthly for regional parks, bi-monthly for neighborhood parks, etc.). The data so far seems to match the volunteer inspection data very closely, which is exciting.

We also rolled out a park inspection survey with a QR code for visitors to our parks to fill out on-site. This is giving us much more information in real time from our parks. This is also an opportunity for us to see comments, some of which are negative but many are positive and constructive, which is great. We share this with our staff, so they get that positive feedback, too.

This data is compiled into a public-facing dashboard, hopefully by the end of June, that shows all the information we get from the park inspections. Buell walks the Board through the dashboard, highlighting that the inspection map overlays with the City's equity index map to help guide prioritization efforts.

Buell thanks the Board and offers to answer any questions.

Flinn commends Buell and SPR staff for excellent design on the survey announcement signs. Baum notes that he participated in an inspection and enjoyed the experience, and valued the sense of ownership that comes with the inspection.

Chatburn notes that inspections are designed to last no longer than about 90 minutes.

Noting the time, Brockhaus adjourns the meeting at 8:30.