



2007 annual report

Mayor's Message

A century ago, the Olmsted brothers helped to create a magnificent park system for a young city. We are fortunate to have inherited such a rich legacy of parks and open space.

Seattle's parks, facilities and open spaces play a vital role in the life of our city. As this city continues to grow, our open space must grow with it.

That starts with making sure that everyone feels welcome and safe in our parks. This year we will see our new Park Rangers, added activities and attractions, and more investments and new security measures in our Center City Parks.

We are finding new ways to add open space. Last year, we finalized an agreement to buy the U.S. Navy's Capehart holding in Discovery Park, which will add 24 acres of breathing space.

And we saw an innovative opportunity to do much more in an unlikely place - over our reservoirs. We could have simply put floating covers on our reservoirs and called it good. Instead, we took this once-in-a-

lifetime opportunity to create new open space across the city.

By 2010, new parks will sit atop the Beacon and Myrtle reservoirs. When all the remaining reservoirs are covered by 2013, we will have added 100 new acres to our city's park system. That's 2½ times as much new parks acreage as the Pro Parks Levy provided.



Mayor, Greg Nickels

As the Pro Parks levy comes to an end, we took steps to ensure that the additional programs and maintenance it funded will continue. Today, these popular programs and services are part of the department's regular budget so they can continue for years to come.

Funding these Levy programs and services freed up money to

support other capital projects. About \$5 million has been set aside to help develop our parks. Look for news later in the spring about how you can help us use this money most effectively.

Also in 2007, I appointed Tim Gallagher to head up Seattle Parks and Recreation, after long-time Parks leader Ken Bounds retired early last year. Tim brings more than 30 years of park and recreation experience to Seattle, most recently as Director of Parks and Recreation for Los Angeles County. He is working closely with the community and his team to develop a Strategic Action Plan which will guide the department for the next five years. Tim is frequently out meeting with the community. If you see him, I hope you will take a moment to welcome him to Seattle.

Thank you to all our partners, community members and volunteers - without whom we could not operate the world-class parks system that we do.

The Olmsted brothers would be proud.

Sincerely,

Greg Nickels
Mayor of Seattle





Superintendent, Tim Gallagher

Superintendent's Message

Dear citizens:

As the new Superintendent of Seattle Parks and Recreation, it has been great getting to know this city, its parks, and its people. After escaping the smog and traffic of Los Angeles, it's easy to appreciate pristine and beautiful Seattle.

Seattle has a thriving parks system and an equally strong community that supports parks.

The past year was one of transition for Seattle Parks and Recreation which saw a new superintendent, a new deputy superintendent (Christopher Williams – the former director of Operations for Parks), and an almost completely new Board of Park Commissioners.

Seattle Parks and Recreation remains committed to maintaining safe and welcoming environments, to offering programming and services that are relevant to your lives — especially as they relate to health and fitness -- and to being a leader in reducing our impact on global climate change.

The Seattle Climate Action Now (CAN) program underscores the City's commitment to reducing our carbon footprint by leading through example. In the past three years, Parks employees have reduced paper use by 41 percent. Our pesticide use in parks has dropped by 75 percent. Fossil fuel usage has decreased, and use of biodiesels has increased. We've boosted utility efficiencies, saving

the City an average of \$92,000 a year, and decreased our annual water usage by 6.75 million gallons.

One of my foremost work priorities is to develop – with you – a Strategic Action Plan (SAP). Already we have held more than 35 community meetings to gain initial input. (For more details about the SAP, see page 3.) We're working on a first draft of this plan that will guide our decision making over the next five years, and we will bring it out to you for comment during another round of meetings in the spring.

Getting out and becoming acquainted with Seattle's neighborhoods, businesses, and communities has been a priority for me. My regular attendance at community and neighborhood meetings has given me the opportunity to meet many of you already.

Some of my favorite evening and weekend activities include jogging and hiking in our parks. This has allowed me to spend time getting to know the wonderful spaces and trails Seattle's parks have to offer. I hope that, if you see me on the trail, you will stop and say hello.

The year ahead will be an exciting one. Please join me in making Seattle Parks and Recreation the best it can be.

Sincerely,

Tim Gallagher
Superintendent

Strategic Action Plan

We are in the process of developing a Strategic Action Plan (SAP) that will guide our actions for the next five years. The original impetus for the SAP was to address the sunset of the Pro Parks Levy – which ends in December 2008. However, Mayor Greg Nickels' budget for 2008, which City Council approved, closed the potential funding gap for Levy-funded programs such as environmental stewardship, maintenance, and recreation by funding these items directly from the General Fund. (See Mayor's Message for more budget details.)

The plan will help us identify what we can improve, what we do well, what threats face parks and recreation today, what opportunities we should focus on, and what the ideal vision is for Seattle Parks and Recreation. An important and integral part of this process is public input. In late November and early December, Parks held 35 public meetings throughout the city. More than 600 citizens attended. An online survey garnered 1,820 responses and we received more than 100 comment cards. More than 850 employees also gave their input into the plan.

Seattle Parks and Recreation, with the help of consultant Berk & Associates, is developing a first draft of the plan based on comments received from the community and employees. We

will take our first draft of the plan to City Council in March and to the community through a second round of public meetings in late March and early April.

A second draft of the plan will be prepared by May – based on feedback from the second round of public involvement – and our target is to submit the final plan to the Mayor in June.

If you haven't already attended one of the public meetings, please consider joining us for one this spring. For more information about the plan, visit us on the web at www.seattle.gov/parks/Publications/ParksActionPlan.htm

Recreation

The breadth of programs offered at Seattle Parks and Recreation touches the lives of thousands of Seattle citizens every year. It's difficult to capture the variety of recreational

opportunities available, but here's a sampling of what we provide to youth, teens, adults, seniors and persons with disabilities.

In 2007, we registered 13,690 participants in our summer camps at 24 different sites. More than 155,000 people visited our nine summer beaches, where we marked our 38th summer without a drowning. We had 13,233 registered participants in our before- and after-school programs. More than 3,200 youth played on 299 teams in our youth basketball teams.

Our programs provided 134,000 hours of direct service to senior adults. Parks' popular special needs overnight camps at Camp Long drew more than 230 campers in 2007. Day camps for special needs served an additional 250 youth campers.

In 2007, there were 26,269 games and 45,160 practices scheduled on Seattle Parks and Recreation sportsfields for a total of 145,481 hours.



Teens participating in Parks' O2 (Outdoor Adventure) program enjoy river rafting. O2 allows teens to learn about nature, build environmental awareness and experience outdoor adventures.

Pro Parks Levy

Seattle voters approved the 8-year, \$198.2 million Pro Parks Levy in November 2000. It will sunset at the end of 2008. In 2007, we made great strides in fulfilling our Levy commitments to voters. The Levy has funded acquisition of new parks and park property, development of new parks, upgrades of existing parks, youth and senior programs, improved park maintenance, and Woodland Park Zoo enhancements.

new park land

In 2007, we added 2.52 acres of new park land to our inventory through the Pro Parks Levy, including two new parks in Capitol Hill and expanding parks in Ballard and the International

This Pro Park Levy Opportunity Fund project installed artistic science elements at Brighton Park to correspond with the science curriculum being taught at nearby Aki Kuroee School.



District. We also added acreage to greenspaces and greenbelts throughout the city.

developing our parks

The Levy development projects have been galloping along at a brisk clip since 2001. Levy projects have included creek daylightings; new art; children's water play features; a park built on a lidded reservoir; off-leash areas; a skate bowl; a disc golf course; and several former City Light Substations converted into neighborhood parks. Along the way, we focused on fiscal, social, and environmental improvements, while completing projects on time and within budget.

In 2007, we completed 13 more projects, bringing the total number of Levy-funded

new and renovated parks to 86. The Levy allocated funding for 114 development projects – including 95 named in the original Levy and 22 identified by the community and funded through an Opportunity Fund. Most of the remaining projects are either in the planning and design phase or are under construction.

Projects completed this year include Ella Bailey Park, with its stunning views of the downtown skyline and Puget Sound; Phase I of Lake Union Park, including the a bridge that connects the east and west parts of the park; the artfully detailed Fremont Peak Park; and the innovative Brighton Science Park – just to name a few.

environmental stewardship

Levy-funded Environmental Stewardship staff and programs continued to make a positive impact. Under the guidance of this unit, Seattle Parks and Recreation has cut our overall paper use by 41 percent, well ahead of the Citywide goal of 30 percent. Our naturalists at Carkeek and Seward parks provided educational outreach services for more than 2,500 individuals. With the aid of 785 volunteers, the Natural Area Crews performed 2,900 hours of labor, completing 53 projects. The Landscape and Athletic Fields crews provided enhanced supplemental maintenance for 37 athletic fields and 130 high profile landscapes.

enhanced maintenance

Comfort stations, downtown parks, community centers, and pools were cleaner in 2007, thanks to Levy-funded maintenance crews. During peak use times and special events, 25 downtown parks received additional cleaning. More than 85 comfort stations got a second daily cleaning during peak use times. The Cleaner Pools program provided 4,125 hours of supplemental cleaning with most time directed to cleaning and maintaining swimming pools, which included 750 hours of work on fountains, water spray features, and wading pools. Cleaning crews provided an additional 3,000 hours of cleaning time at community centers.

recreation

Children, youth, and senior adults all benefit from Levy-funded recreation programs. Teen Development Leaders reached out to 7,000 teenagers in 2007. Some families in all 22 child care programs for before- and after-school care received scholarships, and most of the funding went to families in southeast Seattle.

The Youth Transportation program provided more than 22,000 rides to teens who would not otherwise have been able to attend a park-related event or visit a park or Parks facility due to lack of transportation. The Learn To Swim program provided



Maasai warrior and Kenyan herdsman Sokoine Ntalamia worked at the Woodland Park Zoo during the summer interpreting exhibits in the African Savanna area. Sokoine previously worked at Amboseli National Park in Kenya as a cultural lecturer and tour guide.

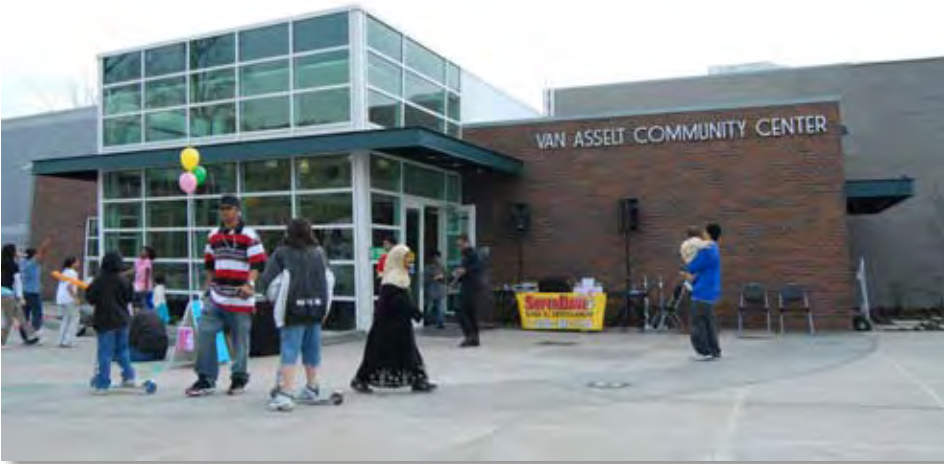
more than 14,000 individual swim lessons to the city's third and fourth graders. Under the direction of Levy-funded staff, the Northwest Senior Games became a regional event for the first time, serving more than 500 athletes in 10 sports.

woodland park zoo

Zoo educational programs supported by the Levy included free transportation and admission to the zoo for 10,162 low-income

children. Other Levy-supported programs include Forest Explorers, Wild Wise, and SOAR (Save Our Amazing Raptors), collectively reaching over 23,350 kids. "Maasai Journey" was the zoo's featured attraction in 2007, and Levy funding supported the redesigned interpretive signage that was a key element of this new experience on the zoo's African Savanna exhibit.





The Van Asselt Community Center expansion and renovation more than doubled the size of the old center.

Community Centers Levy

In 2007, we came close to implementing all the projects named in the Community Centers Levy, completing eight of the nine projects. (The following projects are listed in order of completion.)

Magnuson: New – \$3.1 million

The renovation of an existing building at Magnuson Park created a new community space complete with a theater. It was completed in January 2004.

High Point: Expansion/renovation – \$3.7 million

This expansion project was completed in March 2004, and earned a certification from the U.S. Green Building Council through its Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program.

Jefferson: Expansion/renovation – \$2.5 million

The addition of a gymnasium and other amenities expanded this facility for greater community use. The renovation was completed in September 2004.

International District/Chinatown:

New – \$2.1 million

A public-private partnership and co-location with a branch of the Seattle Public Library has made this a hugely popular community amenity. The center was completed in September 2004.

Yesler: Replacement – \$6.6 million

This brand new center is a model of energy efficiency, earning a Gold LEED certification. The center was completed in February 2005.

Southwest: Expansion/renovation – \$2.3 million

A new gymnasium, teen center, and computer lab added much-needed services. It was completed in May 2005.

Northgate: New – \$8.2 million

As the civic center of Northgate, this new community center is co-located with a brand new park and branch library. The center opened in July 2006 and is expected to receive a Gold LEED certification for its innovative and “green” design.

Van Asselt: Expansion – \$3.9 million

An increase of 8,000 square feet more than doubled the size of the old center, adding a kitchen, foyer and meeting rooms. The center opened in February 2007.

Belltown: New – \$1.9 million

As the last project to be completed from the Community Centers Levy, Belltown has been a challenging neighborhood in which to find a suitable and affordable location. The intent is to develop an approximately 5,000- to 7,000-square-foot facility with a multi-purpose room, kitchen, and spaces for neighborhood events and celebrations that can serve as a civic focal point, available for public meetings, classes and rentals.

Previous attempts to site the facility with the Low Income Housing Institute’s (LIHI) Belltown View site were unsuccessful. Parks has actively

investigated many locations in the Belltown neighborhood for a short-term lease arrangement to house a community center; however, spaces meeting criteria for a center have been virtually non-existent. We are now actively exploring other options for a permanent location.

Parks’ Partners

We could not do what we do at Parks and Recreation without the active support of our partners. Here are a few key organizations that support our mission.

associated recreation council

Parks’ partnership with the Associated Recreation (ARC) and its 38 member advisory councils has proven to be remarkably resilient over the past 32 years. In 2007, ARC brought in \$11 million in revenue, an increase of 5 percent over the previous year, and employed more than 1,000 program staff. Through funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and others, the partnership implemented the TechNet Program, an after school academic support and technology skill building effort at eight community center sites.



board of park commissioners

The Seattle Board of Park Commissioners is a volunteer advisory board that makes recommendations to City Council, the Mayor, and the Superintendent regarding policies for the planning, development and use of City park and recreation facilities. In early 2007, City Council amended

the membership of the seven-member advisory board. With that amendment, three members are appointed by the Mayor, three by City Council, and the seventh member is selected by the other six members. Last year saw many changes to the composition of the Board. As we begin 2008, all positions are filled and the Board has a full complement of commissioners for the first time in a year.



The new 120,000 gallon Windows on Washington exhibit at the Seattle Aquarium offers visitors a chance to see what’s just beneath surface of the Puget Sound.

Seattle Aquarium

The expanded Seattle Aquarium opened in June after a \$41 million renovation. The City of Seattle provided \$24 million to rebuild the structure of the facility, and the Seattle Aquarium Society raised \$17 million to fund new exhibits, an entry on Alaskan Way, a café/catering facility, an expanded gift shop, and the Puget

Sound Hall. The expansion was completed on schedule and under budget and has resulted in a 25 percent increase in attendance. Perhaps most important, it provides a meeting venue to focus efforts to deal with environmental issues ranging from saving Puget Sound to dealing with global climate change.

seattle parks foundation

Seattle Parks Foundation is an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to improving and expanding Seattle's parks and green spaces. The Parks Foundation has raised \$24 million in support of parks since 2001, and has completed 23 park projects. In 2007, the Parks Foundation broke ground on the 12-acre Lake Union Park, received its 100th bench donation, and launched the Tree Program, while improving nine neighborhood parks and green spaces.

volunteers

Whether it's spending a Saturday morning pulling invasive species like English Ivy or Himalayan Blackberry from our precious urban forests or dedicating hours after work to help at-risk teens achieve goals that improve self esteem and create opportunities for the



In 2007, volunteers donated more than 305,000 hours of service – valued at \$5.7 million.

future, our volunteers are a vital part of our success. In 2007, 20,000 volunteers donated 293,194 hours – the equivalent of \$5.5 million worth of volunteer labor, based on the U.S average hourly value for volunteer time of \$18.77 an hour.

Customer Service

In 2007, we vastly improved customer service by completing the rollout of a new electronic registration, reservation and point-of-sale system. The new

software system modernizes our business practices, making it easier and more efficient for customers to register for classes and programs, reserve parks, shelters and facilities, and pay for services electronically. Customers can also register online using the system, Seattle Parks and Recreation Connection (SPARC).

One example of improved service is at Amy Yee Tennis Center, where demand for tennis classes outstrips supply. Summer tennis instruction is so popular that – in the past – anyone who wanted to register for classes at the center had to fill out paper forms and enter a lottery. It typically took employees three to four weeks to sort out the lottery and notify registrants of their acceptance into a class. The new electronic system does away with the lottery and reduces registration to between one and three days. In addition, staff can monitor what type of classes are filling the most quickly, and add programming whenever possible.



In 2007, Parks made significant progress on Phase I of Lake Union Park, which will open in spring 2008.

Also this year, we rolled out Quick Cards at our aquatic facilities to make it easier for patrons to enjoy our pools. Until this year, if you wanted to take a class or enroll in a program at one of our pools, you would have purchased a paper punch card. This time-consuming method required pool patrons to interact with pool cashiers every time they wanted to use the pool, sometimes standing in long lines. The new Quick Card, with picture ID, allows swimmers to bypass lines by simply swiping their cards through an electronic reader, which deducts a fee directly from a pre-paid account.

The project that rolled out all these electronic efficiencies – called the Pyramid Project – has been called one of the most successful technology projects the City has ever undertaken because of the value that’s been returned to users and the fact that it rolled out on time and under budget. In 2007, the project won the City’s Excellence in Information Technology Project Management Award.

Next time you want to find a yoga class or sign your kid up for an arts and crafts class, check out our electronic registration system online at www.seattle.gov/parks. Just click on SPARC!



Robin O’Leary at the Southwest Pool demonstrates how the new Quick Card works.

Climate Action Now

Seattle is taking action to prevent one of the biggest threats to the future of our city and the planet – climate change. Through



Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels’ Climate Action Now initiative, we are committed to leading by example and helping everyone in the city take steps today to reduce climate-changing pollution in their homes, at work, and on the road.

efficiencies and reduced fuel use

In 2007, Parks reduced fuel usage by about one percent – or 2,692 gallons. We also increased our use of bio-diesel and B40 gasoline. B40 is 40 percent vegetable based and 60 percent fossil fuel. Bio-diesel is 20 percent vegetable based and 80 percent fossil fuel. Both are engineered to emit fewer particles. Our total use of all diesel and unleaded dropped 14 percent in 2007 – or by 31,671 gallons, and our use of bio-diesel and B40 increased by 72 percent – or 28,522 gallons.

We completed a number of capital projects that make our facilities run more efficiently, including boiler tune-ups and new controls and upgrades at

Queen Anne Pool that reduce heat loss. These changes will save more than 23,000 therms of natural gas each year. Lighting efficiency upgrades will save more than 450,000 kilowatt hours of electricity each year. New water conservation activities, such as new toilets and efficient showerheads, are on track to reduce our water consumption by 6.75 million gallons each year. Not only will these changes benefit the environment, but they also benefit taxpayers with a total savings estimated to exceed \$92,000 a year in utility costs.

supporting forests

In 2007, the Green Seattle Partnership, a unique public-private venture dedicated to promoting a livable city by re-establishing and maintaining healthy urban forests, reached its goal of restoring 100 acres of urban forest and planting 6,500 seedlings in Seattle's parks.

Since 2004, Parks employees have reduced our overall paper use by a whopping 41 percent. Inspired by Mayor Nickels' PaperCuts program to reduce our white paper use by 30 percent by the end of 2007, Parks employees exceeded that goal by another third. In 2006 and 2007 that translates into 5,503 fewer reams of paper used, saving 330 trees and reducing our carbon footprint by 83,600 pounds of CO₂.

sustainable construction

In 2007, the Ross Park Shelterhouse project received a 2007 American Institute of Architects Civic Design Award. This Pro Parks Levy funded project has Seattle Parks' only green roof, with native grasses and plants growing there. We have submitted applications to the U.S. Green Building Council for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) for two community center projects. Northgate Community Center was constructed with the goal of achieving Gold LEED and Montlake Community Center renovations were completed with the objective of achieving Silver LEED.

restore our waters

The Mayor's Restore Our Waters (ROW) strategy is aimed at restoring and preserving all the many bodies of water that surround and flow through Seattle. In 2007, Parks worked with the Friends of Madrona Woods and Seattle Public Utilities to daylight a portion of Madrona Creek and restore its natural connection to Lake Washington. The project provides significant habitat improvements for salmon, and is a living laboratory and outdoor classroom for environmental education.

Parks also worked with the Army Corps of Engineers and the King County Conservation



Volunteers with Friends of Madrona Woods participate in a work party at the Madrona Creek daylighting project.

District to restore habitat for juvenile Chinook salmon on the shores Lake Washington in Seward Park by removing non-native Lombardy Poplars, blackberries, and grasses and placing more than 5,500 tons of sands and gravel. Chinook salmon is considered a “threatened” species by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Center City Parks

Beginning this past summer and running through the end of the year, Parks offered a number of exciting programs and fun activities in downtown Seattle to revitalize and bring new life to our outdoor spaces. Events ranged from movies and music to classes and competitions, each of which helped to highlight and celebrate our diverse downtown neighborhoods.

Our Center City Busker Program brought independent street performers to Hing Hay, Occidental, Freeway, Westlake, and Waterfront parks during lunchtimes throughout the summer. Most of the performers were musicians, but others included balloon art makers and portrait artists.

Dancing ‘Til Dusk featured five Thursday evenings of free dance instruction and dance time at Freeway park with live music and an outdoor dance floor. Each night featured a different dance style



Dancing ‘Til Dusk at Freeway Park last summer was a popular and well attended program.

ranging from Waltz to Zydeco and Salsa to Swing.

The program was so successful that Parks, working with our many partners from 2007, will expand and enhance the program in 2008. Check out Parks’ website in the spring for a complete listing of our summer 2008 program.

Magnuson Park

This past year marked the beginning of the agreement between Seattle Parks and Recreation and The Mountaineers Club as a tenant of Building 67. The club will renovate this deteriorating building as its new headquarters and offer free programming and access to its indoor climbing wall.

We came one step closer in 2007 to realizing the vision of the Sand Point Historic District. Late in the year, we held three open houses to discuss with the public our progress in developing concessionaire relationships with several organizations that will invest in the park by shoring up existing infrastructure, and offer unique, public access programming to the public. Organizations such as Cascade Bicycle Club, Building 11 LLC, Civic Light Opera, Arena Sports, Seattle Sport Courts Unlimited, and the Sand Point Arts and Cultural Exchange have all submitted proposals to the City. City Council will consider and vote on these proposals in 2008.

In December, the Army Corps of Engineers gave the green light to move forward with the construction of the Pro Parks Levy funded installation of five ballfields and more than 40 acres of wetlands. Other improvements will include the removal of a parking lot and restoration of the area to a wetland and the installation of pedestrian improvements at the 65th Street park entrance. The project is expected to go out to bid in the spring with construction taking place this summer. Completion is expected in fall 2009.





Aerial view of Sandpoint and Magnuson Park on Lake Washington.

credits

This report was prepared by Joelle Ligon, editor, and Kellie Wichser, graphic designer. For more information, please contact Dewey Potter at dewey.potter@seattle.gov or 684-7241 or visit our website at www.seattle.gov/parks.