



Date: June 18, 2009

To: Board of Parks Commissioners

From: Michael Shiosaki, Deputy Director, Planning & Development Division

Subject: Park Classification System

Requested Board Action

No action is requested of the Board. This briefing is intended to provide an overview of the proposed system to classify all parks and open space land in Seattle's parks system. The briefing is set for the July 9th meeting of the Board.

Project Background

The proposed Seattle Park's Classification system presents a method for grouping parks and facilities in Seattle's parks and open space system based on similar characteristics. The descriptors and characteristics for each park type are based roughly on the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) park classifications and Seattle Parks' 1974 Recreation Standards, and then modified to reflect the combination of descriptors typically found in different types of parks in the Seattle system. The classifications are generally driven by each park's

- physical characteristics (size and setting),
- built environment (amount of developed land and assets),
- natural environment (size natural areas and environmental benefit), and
- programming.

Attachment 1 provides a detailed summary of the proposed Seattle Park's Classification system. Attachment 2 provides a list of all Seattle parks grouped according to the classification system.

This classification system serves the following purposes:

- The classifications will provide a general guideline for future development options. The combination of descriptors for each park type represents what has generally been successful on a certain sized plot of land located in a certain type of physical environment. These guidelines can help to set community expectations for a given site.
- These classifications may serve as a basis for policies around appropriate programming in different park types.

- These classifications may inform functional planting design standards and other design standards.

Park Classifications - The following park classifications have been identified:

- Triangles/Circles/Squares
- Pocket Park
- Downtown Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
- Recreation Area
- Natural Area/Greenbelt
- Boulevards/Green Streets/Trails
- Special-Use Park

Strategic Action Plan

The need for a Park Classification system is specifically called out as an action strategy in the Strategic Action Plan, Goal 1. The plan states, “Create and adopt a consistent land classification system that defines appropriate uses to identify the capacity of each land resource

- i. Classify all Seattle parks and open space land
- ii. Communicate these categories effectively and consistently, defining what the land classification system means in terms of intensity of use, kinds of use, and potential future development.”

Public Involvement Process

This system has been developed with input from staff members throughout the Department. No public involvement has been undertaken.

Environmental Sustainability

As new parks are developed or changes to existing parks are proposed, use of the park classification system may allow for better alignment of a park site that has specific environmental attributes with appropriate development and programming options.

Budget

No budget impacts are anticipated.

Schedule

The system will be put to use over time as new parks are planned and changes are proposed to programming of existing parks.

Additional Information

For more information, please contact me via phone at 206.684.0750 or by e-mail at michael.shiosaki@seattle.gov