

## STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN PUBLIC MEETING PHASE 1

### Magnolia Community Center: November 27, 2007

Total Participants: 18 Public, 5 Parks and Recreation Staff

#### Major Themes

The points of discussion at the Magnolia Community Center Strategic Action Plan public meeting were:

- Off-leash areas
- Swimming pools
- Field sports (including lacrosse, football, baseball)
- Nature and environmental education
- Access for disabled citizens

### 1. What could Parks and Recreation improve?

#### *Parks and Facilities*

- 2nd tier disaster plan: need to use public areas as centers for disasters—parks need to be funded as shelters, communication hubs, and supply distribution centers
- Increase staffing: naturalists, maintenance, rangers especially at Discovery Park

#### *Pools*

- Pools, closed - too many and too long; how Parks closes for maintenance, scheduling and programming by age group, year round capability
- More pools
- More pools that are accessible and warm water therapy pools
- Provide transport to pools, etc. for those with disabilities

#### *Off-Leash Areas*

- Off-leash area, were told that there was no funding, off-leash area should not be in grass parkland, use other City land
- Some good grass off-leash areas
- Some sites for off-leash areas were inadequate, also true for other purposes (ex. Woodland off-leash area)
- Open dog park in Queen Anne and Magnolia, no progress despite promise, no responsiveness, need follow-through, need communication with Citizens for off-leash areas (COLA)
- Queen Anne and Magnolia approved but not funded

#### *Public Engagement*

- More outreach to community, don't assume COLA is only citizen representation
- Friends of Discovery Park don't speak for everyone, invite others—don't give nod to loudest voice

- What is parks vision for community? Prioritize and communicate

### ***Playfields***

- Little League Football, frustrated scheduling field time, have to compete with soccer
- Just because Little League Football is smaller, don't ignore
- Designate a facility for football
- Can't get field for extended play off season and yet field not being used
- Baseball and soccer win over lacrosse and football
- Make field allocation more transparent. For example: baseball vs. lacrosse, growth vs. decline, what is mechanism to match changing interests? How does decision process work?
- Park mandate to prioritize unscheduled time—could provide more transparency to unscheduled time. Why not schedule more fields? Smith Cove?
- Magnolia Little League has lots of money—they'd like to partner to improve field but get resistance
- Friends of Fields, revive similar group to get more fields

## **2. What does Parks and Recreation do well?**

### ***Parks and Facilities***

- Community Centers, Pools, Environmental Learning Centers & Staff
- Discovery Park
- Acquiring more parks & open space
- Land Acquisition

### ***Programs and Services***

- Community Center programming
- Community Center is an asset to the neighborhood
- Great staff at QA and Mounger Pool
- Environmental Learning Centers do a good job of providing education and opportunities

### ***Public Engagement***

- Public outreach & access to information
- City does a good job of reaching out to it's citizens (broad range of people)
- Website is good
- Wheelchair access info on website

## **3. What are the threats facing Parks and Recreation?**

### ***Parks and Facilities***

- Aging infrastructure
- Maintaining our lands/buildings/assets and keeping them up to par
- Keeping landmark buildings vs. building new ones
- Upgrading facilities for older population and those with disabilities
- Building usage
- Increasing and varied use of parks without privatization
- Less emphasis on destination parks, more on local neighborhood parks - upkeep on those parks
- Usage of our parks - need to support a variety of users (i.e. football, lacrosse, swimmers, etc)

- Does SBP include master plans of our destination parks? If not, it should filter into the SBP
- Safety & security
- Parks addressing non-parks uses by citizens (i.e. Homeless, safety)

### ***Finances***

- Negative shift towards privatization of parks - parks for revenue
- Revenue programs vs. public programs (i.e. Pool Partner)
- New levy
- Efficient operation
- Government utilizing its funds effectively

### ***Public Engagement***

- Developing voter outreach - end goal of a new levy

## **4. What are the major trends affecting Parks and Recreation?**

### ***Programs and Services***

- Volunteer time declining
- Want to revisit reliance on volunteers to get matching grants to get improvements (ex. Ursula Judkins viewpoint, COLA)
- Time is a problem for meetings and volunteering

### ***Public Engagement***

- Transparency of decision-making and communication
- Transparency and communications, more is expected
- Need transparency and communication, set priorities and go
- Transparency and technology—better information on demands on parks, better accountability on expenditures, we need to use info to make smart decisions
- Transparency drives budget decisions and expenditures
- People come from other geographical locations with higher expectations, more questioning of past decisions
- Development - bring together more stakeholders, parks, Port, Etc., when decisions being made about park property

### ***Parks and Facilities***

- Population growth & lack of resources to meet growing needs
- Growth in population, marketing or lobbying for Parks support is needed. Expand, acquire, develop parks and facilities, optimize current facilities, line item for acquisition

### ***Finances***

- No money, not enough to do everything we need
- Elementary schools overflowing, need more fields and open spaces for more kids
- Inclusive programming; equal opportunities for all programs (i.e. accessibility)

## 5. What is your vision for Parks and Recreation?

### *Public Engagement*

- Be an organization open to change
- Have parks focus on quality of life
- Have parks be aggressive leaders