

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN PUBLIC MEETING PHASE 1

Miller Community Center: December 8, 2007

Total Participants: 12 Public, 3 Parks and Recreation Staff

Major Themes

Public Engagement was a major theme of the evening with comments directed at needing better volunteer coordination, wanting an easier to use and more functional website, and better outreach – particularly to ethnic communities and non-users.

1. What could Parks and Recreation improve?

Public Engagement

- Better marketing – info about programs/opportunities; different avenues to different groups – teens
- Easier to get electronic info on website (staff/ACS, etc)
- Stronger connection between “Friends Of” and other stewardship groups – lesson from ARC
- Let people know what ARC/AC’s – how they are a part of programming at sites
- Better connection of volunteers in sites—more recruitment/involvement on recreation side (Program delivery, Maintenance, drop-in activities/supervision for teens, etc.)
- System approach to community mailings – get info out w/in certain radius of facilities
- There are gaps in information distribution especially to community members that don’t have kids
- Need to direct mail to get info out
- Web searches – cumbersome on government pages
- Use existing systems to develop listservs, etc. Cross promote other opportunities
- Better information about schedules
- Opportunities for seniors to give back to community – organized ways to help w/ tutoring, etc.

Programs and Services

- YMCA – Partners w/ youth programs may be model for Parks and Recreation. Greater emphasis on volunteerism interaction w/ youth
- Timing – exercise/yoga in evenings for adults/50+ that have other commitments – care for grandkids
- Younger retired wanting active programs, hiking, etc.
- Timing of and types of programs offered not meeting needs of adults, consider demographics of area—evening/weekend for working adults (exercise/dance – arts type classes)

Parks and Facilities

- Community Center Design – We should learn from mistakes and take acoustics into account when designing meeting Rooms/MP spaces; Montlake used as the example of poor acoustics
- Closer location of off-leash area to community
- Protection of Olmsted Parks – not the intent of the Olmsted Plan which is more passive recreation

Green Practices

- Parks and Recreation should be a model for environmental stewardship (Door Open/Heat on)

Maintenance

- Maintenance – facilities looking drab. Choices of materials
- Maintenance – Need to have enough resources to maintain investments

Finances

- Need to consider resource impact

2. What does Parks and Recreation do well?

Programs and Services

- Keep 50+ programs – different mission than Senior Centers. Important to keep focus on active programming: Hiking/Trips
- Encouraging positive programs in outdoor parks – Cal Anderson success
- Seed programs and let community know how to access Parks and Recreation system to continue programs
- 50+ programs: make it possible for new members of community to meet friends, go hiking even though don't have car; access beautiful locations they wouldn't be able to do alone; not only so that they enjoy it, but they deserve it
- Programs for kids: preschool, teen camps, swimming lessons
- Drop in tot play spaces
- Aquatics programs serve adults well, indoor pools; Coleman is a treasure, Question if it serves seniors well
- Food and Fitness Programs

Parks and Facilities

- Love meadow spaces like Discovery Park—may have too many lawns, Ecological restoration zones, interpretive signs, trails, etc.
- Access to more distant parks (Some w/o cars find bus service meets needs well)
- Magnuson Park – Love openness, dog parks, ability to watch kids play
- Seniors walk w/ dogs – now have to get there, may be room for improvements

Public Engagement

- Benefit to community – builds community, creates desire to give back too
- Word of Mouth – Strong Support of Opportunities
- Outreach to new users: Vietnamese, Samoan, Somali, Korean, ability to cross promote programs
- Have users that don't speak English, provide opportunities for them to learn English (Yesler ESL Computer Classes)
- Provide opportunities for people to maintain cultural identity (Outreach to these communities an issue)

Staff

- Parks staff – fluid schedules to be out at community events, etc. Staff with schedules to be in the facilities when people there
- Staff at pools is great!

Maintenance

- Parks and Recreation needs to not just address immediate problems, but also keep up ongoing maintenance

3. What are the issues and challenges that Parks and Recreation will face in the next five years?

Finances

- Funding – Tim Eyman Initiatives
- Funding – Don't combine funding w/ Senior Centers
- Balance between maintenance and programming – investment in facilities for long term upkeep while keeping funding for programming

Parks and Facilities

- Is Langston Hughes PAC Focus in serving African American Community under threat of expanding purpose – Diamond in the crown (More marketing to highlight opportunities)
- Opportunity to spend time at an outdoor pool east of Highway 99, indoor Tennis is another – AYTC now + Magnuson Development
- Sound Transit tunnel may impact Interlaken park

Public Engagement

- Seattle becoming 'haves/have nots' – Parks need to ensure access/equity to services
- Neighborhood involvement – Provide opportunity for people to hear each others opinions/issues

Maintenance

- Storm water runoff to parks lands – they are not draining facilities

Safety and Security

- Real and Perceived issues of public safety

4. What are the emerging trends that will drive how Parks and Recreation does business over the next five years?

Parks and Facilities

- Getting community centers in Downtown – Getting people more involved
- More open spaces Downtown – active/passive recreation, opportunities to leverage w/ private developments
- New Civic Center 4th and James – hopefully will feel like a park
- Use City Hall – Plaza area could be used for recreation programs/community events
- Pier 61 – Invest in understructure to provide for community events/open spaces
- Require private developers – 1% arts, user fees for recreation services/ open spaces as they are high density

Programs and Services

- Programming at Denny Park

5. What is your vision for Parks and Recreation?

Programs and Services

- More affordable concert series (ex. Chicago's free culture festivals)
- Maintain small neighborhood opportunities for interaction as well as city-wide and sector level events

Parks and Facilities

- Open spaces and outdoor spaces are primary service of Parks and Recreation
- Opportunities for people to slow down and notice what's around you

Public Engagement

- Neighborhood opportunities, get info out about other programs
- Continue community centered approach, allow/encourage more street entertainment (buskers w/ open case for donation), comedians

Other

- Be a pioneer in the nation