

June 2008



To: The Seattle Community

From: Timothy A. Gallagher, Superintendent of Seattle Parks and Recreation

Re: Draft Strategic Action Plan: 2008-2012, *Building for Tomorrow, Today*

Seattle Parks and Recreation is pleased to submit to the public the attached Strategic Action Plan: 2008-2012, *Building for Tomorrow, Today*. The draft Plan represents the collaborative efforts of Seattle residents, Parks and Recreation staff, the Mayor's Office, and partners to create an action-oriented work plan to guide us over the next five years. The outcome of this effort will help ensure that we serve as an efficient steward of public investment, while concurrently maintaining a high quality of service and standards that meet community needs.

We are developing this Plan during a transformational moment in Seattle Parks and Recreation's history. Over the last ten years we have seen both a significant expansion of the Parks and Recreation system and rapidly changing local demographic needs. Many of these needs mirror emerging trends that other parks and recreation departments across the country are facing. In light of these changes, we must strategically evaluate our facilities, services, and operations to continue to meet our future commitments.

Over the past eight months, Parks and Recreation sought input from the community on the Strategic Action Plan. We held more than 70 public meetings throughout the City where people took the opportunity to speak about their hopes and vision for Seattle's parks and recreation system, and to tell us of their concerns and fears. Comments from the public, from Parks and Recreation staff, and from City officials were incorporated into the Plan. Each year we will provide a report that will update the community on our progress implementing the Plan.

The draft Plan is organized into six goals that identify areas where we will dedicate our energies over the next five years. The first four goals are externally focused: providing active stewardship for the City's parks and open spaces; supporting healthy lifestyles and diversity through recreation opportunities; strengthening relationships with the public; and maintaining Parks and Recreation land and facilities. The last two goals are more internally focused and are dedicated to building capacity and culture within Parks and Recreation, and to strengthening structures and systems across the organization to serve our needs more effectively. We have also been careful to align Plan elements with Mayor Greg Nickels' priorities and initiatives.

As you read through the six goals, you will find common threads that will be a focus for us over the next five years. The threads are open communication and trust that is built from openness, and building capacity within the organization to ensure that we can fulfill our vision of "Creating community through people, parks, and programs."

Sincerely,

Timothy Gallagher, Superintendent

Seattle Parks and Recreation

SEATTLE PARKS AND RECREATION STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN: 2008-2012

Building for Tomorrow, Today



Introduction

Parks and Recreation is an Essential Component of the Community

Parks and recreation is an essential element of any healthy and vibrant community, providing individual, social, and economic value. People rely on Seattle's parks, open spaces, and recreation programs for many benefits, ranging from the pursuit of health and fitness to the desire for self-education, finding a connection with nature, or simply seeking a sense of belonging. Parks and Recreation encourages individuals and groups to connect with one another to create welcoming, diverse, open, and fun spaces and environments. Parks and Recreation has also become an integral component in economic development and sustainability strategies that help position Seattle as a regional, state, and global leader in the 21st century.

Seattle Parks and Recreation currently owns approximately 11% of the city's total land area, including over 400 parks and open areas, and more than 6,200 acres of park land. Taken as a whole, these parks and open spaces create a green infrastructure that provides a refuge from the bustle of urban life, making Seattle a more beautiful and livable city. Such spaces also serve to sustain and protect our ecosystem for current and future generations through the preservation of habitat, improvement of air and water quality, and encouragement of civic pride in the community's natural resources.

Parks and Recreation also operates a range of facilities devoted to providing a wealth of health, recreation, and education opportunities. These facilities include community centers, teen life centers, environmental learning centers, arts venues, athletic facilities, pools, tennis courts, golf courses, fishing piers, and an aquarium. Recreational programming and special events offered within and outside of these facilities work to enrich the lives of all people, and provide special focus for at-risk youth, people with disabilities, immigrant and refugee populations, seniors, minorities, and families.

Last, Parks and Recreation delivers quality customer service through its employees, its most valued resource, who are charged with creating an environment that is safe and beneficial for all. We value the community's commitment and support, including volunteer efforts on behalf of Parks and Recreation, and we constantly seek new and innovative ways to help serve the public.

Parks and Recreation at a Glance

- 6,200 Total Acres
- 430 Parks
- 185 Athletic Fields
- 112 Neighborhood Play Areas
- 9 Swimming Beaches
- 24 Miles of shoreline
- 18 Fishing Piers
- 4 Golf Courses
- 22 Miles of Boulevards
- 26 Community Centers
- 8 Indoor and 2 Outdoor Pools
- 27 Wading Pools
- 151 Outdoor Tennis Courts
- Amy Yee Tennis Center
- Seattle Aquarium
- Volunteer Park Conservatory

Parks and Recreation's Commitment to the Community (New Section, to be written)

Develop a new section discussing Parks and Recreation's motivations (mission and core function, meeting the community's need), commitment to transparent decision-making during plan implementation, and process for ongoing accountability to the community, staff, and to City leaders. This section comes out of significant feedback from the Council, the public, and staff that represents a lack of trust in Parks and Recreation.

This section will include at least:

- A general statement about the complexities of the department, the polarities within community, staff, and Council priorities (i.e. balancing active and passive space)
- How Parks and Recreation will be accountable to the community, staff, and City leadership
- In response to Council's Letter:
 - Discussion of Parks and Recreation core functions, specifically to serve the community's ever-changing changing needs
 - Decision-making process for Service Choices (Section 2) and how the Plan will help Parks and Recreation address some of the most challenging tradeoffs/choices

Plan Development and Strategy Prioritization

This section will discuss how Parks and Recreation decided what suggestions were incorporated into the Plan and how the Department prioritized elements of the Plan using some or all of the following questions:

- Is the task on the critical path and must be undertaken before others can begin?
- Can the task be accomplished with existing funds or are new resources required?
- Does the task address Council priorities and the Executive's Initiatives?
- Could the task contribute to significant efficiency gains or cost savings?
- Is the task needed to meet regulatory requirements, address time-critical natural resource protection or restoration needs, or fix health and safety hazards?
- Does the task lead to benefits for a large number of users now and in the future?
- Does the task benefit historically under-served user groups or neighborhoods?
- Has the task been made a priority based on substantial comment from community or neighborhood groups?
- Others?

Parks and Recreation's Role in the Mayor's Priorities and Strategic Initiatives

The Strategic Action Plan is intended to align with and support the Mayor's core priorities and strategic initiatives, detailed below. Such efforts are the foundation of many of the goals found throughout the Plan and will help shape future decision making within Parks and Recreation over the long and short-term.

Mayor Nickels' Priorities

Get Seattle Moving. "Transportation will continue to be a paramount issue for our economy, the environment and the people who live in Seattle. In order for businesses to thrive, generating jobs and tax revenues, we must be able to move goods and people around the region efficiently." – Mayor Greg Nickels

Keep our Neighborhoods Safe. "Public safety is the paramount duty of the City. Our police and fire personnel are first rate and should be recognized as such. We need to give them the tools – training and equipment – to do these difficult jobs, ensure accountability for actions taken, and ensure we are the most prepared city in the United States for natural or man-made disasters." – Mayor Greg Nickels

Create Jobs and Opportunity for All. "Economic Opportunity during these difficult times means creating jobs and an environment that invites new investment in our city." – Mayor Greg Nickels

Build Strong Families and Healthy Communities. "Healthy communities are the heart of a great city. Every part of this city is unique and vital to our growth and our ability to sustain what we love about living and working here. Our diverse cultures bring life, vitality, and economic growth to Seattle. As Mayor, I want to foster a renewed commitment to our neighborhoods. That means paying attention to the needs of each community and responding to those needs in a meaningful way." – Mayor Greg Nickels

Mayor Nickels' Initiatives

Seattle Climate Action Now. "This grassroots campaign encourages everyone in Seattle to reduce global warming pollution at home, on the road and in their neighborhoods." – Mayor Greg Nickels

<http://seattlecan.org/>

U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. "The U.S. leads the world in greenhouse gas pollution when we should be leading it toward a solution. That is why it is so important for cities like Seattle to step up and provide the leadership that is lacking in Washington D.C." – Mayor Greg Nickels

<http://www.seattle.gov/mayor/climate/>

Did you know:

- Seattle's largest park is Discovery Park at 534 acres
- Seattle has two parks (Genesee and Interbay Golf Center) on former landfills
- Seattle's oldest park, dedicated in 1884, is Denny Park at Dexter and Denny
- Seattle has three parks (Magnuson, Discovery, and Lake Union parks) on former military bases

Mayor Nickels' Green Ribbon Commission on Climate Protection. “The Commission calls on the entire community to join the fight against climate disruption with the release of the Seattle Climate Action Plan, the most comprehensive program in the city's history for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.” – Mayor Greg Nickels
<http://www.seattle.gov/climate/about.htm>

Environmental Action Agenda. “The cornerstone of this agenda is a new goal for the City to reduce regional greenhouse gas emissions across our community and region, seeking to meet or beat the Kyoto target.” – Mayor Greg Nickels
<http://www.seattle.gov/mayor/issues/ea/>

Emergency Preparedness. “My goal is to make Seattle the most prepared city in America. There's still more to do, but in the last three years we've significantly increased our ability to deal with natural or man-made disasters. We've strengthened infrastructure like bridges and fire stations; helped businesses and residents to retrofit; participated in national emergency exercises and made sure our plans include citizens who are vulnerable.” – Mayor Greg Nickels
<http://www.seattle.gov/mayor/issues/emergencyPrep/>

Pedestrian Safety. “Year after year Seattle wins awards for being a walkable city. I want to make sure residents and visitors can walk throughout Seattle safely – that means increasing pedestrian and driver awareness.” – Mayor Greg Nickels
<http://www.seattle.gov/mayor/issues/pedsafety/>

Race and Social Justice Initiative. “The City of Seattle is becoming increasingly diverse. This diversity gives us much to celebrate, but it also challenges us to be respectful of all backgrounds. We want to ensure that the City is responsive to all the communities we serve and all the people who work here.” – Mayor Greg Nickels
<http://www.seattle.gov/mayor/issues/rsji/>

Green Seattle Partnership. “The City's Green Seattle Partnership with the Cascade Land Conservancy was formed to restore 2,500 acres of forested parkland by 2025. Visit the Partnership's website to learn more about the program and how you can get involved. The site also includes best practices for removing invasive plants.” – Mayor Greg Nickels
<http://greenseattle.org/>

Restore our Waters. “Seattle is defined by water – our creeks, lakes, Puget Sound, the Duwamish River and other water bodies make the city a great place for people and for fish and other wildlife. The City is making smart investments to restore habitat along our shorelines, from creating fish-friendly beaches to planting native vegetation for wildlife habitat. You can help by improving habitat on your property, reducing pollution in our creeks or even planning your own neighborhood restoration project.” – Mayor Greg Nickels
<http://www.seattle.gov/mayor/issues/row.htm>

Parks and Recreation's Budget, Funding, and Fee Structure

Parks and Recreation's 2008 operating budget is \$125.3 million. The operating budget is the money required for everyday operations such as the delivery of programs and maintenance of land and facilities. It is supported by a mix of revenue sources, including the City's General Fund, dedicated taxes, user fees, and concession payments from vendors. Capital projects are funded separately from voter-approved bonds and levies, grants, and the City's Cumulative Reserve Subfund.

Under the City Charter, the Parks Fund receives a dedicated 10% of tax and license revenues that would otherwise accrue to the General Fund. These "charter revenues" total approximately \$36.2 million for 2008; the largest amounts come from the City's general business and occupation (B&O) tax and various utility taxes. The General Fund also provides \$39.6 million of direct support for the Parks Fund. Fees and charges are the largest remaining share of revenues, accounting for about \$27.0 million for 2008.

Charter revenues change in response to economic conditions. To remove this uncertainty from the Parks and Recreation budget, the City in recent years has committed to provide the budgeted total of General Fund and Charter revenues to the Parks Fund each year. If Charter revenues fall below estimates, then additional General Fund support is provided. Thus, if the economy is strong and Charter revenues exceed estimates, the amount of General Fund provided is reduced accordingly. Balancing the Charter Revenues and General Fund insulates the Parks Fund from short-term revenue fluctuations.

Various factors are considered in setting fees, including the cost of service, fees charged for similar programs in neighboring jurisdictions, and social policy objectives. The draft Plan calls for a fresh look at setting fees. Fees typically are adjusted every two years through the biennial budget process.

How to Read the Draft Strategic Action Plan

The draft Strategic Action Plan is based on an open process of collaborative thinking, decision-making, and input from Parks and Recreation staff, City leadership, and the public. The Plan serves as a work plan that identifies goals that Parks and Recreation will focus on over the next five years, and outlines specific action strategies that will help accomplish these goals. Specifically identified are initiatives and work needed for Parks and Recreation to respond effectively to such external conditions as demographic and economic changes.

Vision, Mission, and Values

The vision, mission, and values statements, defined below, provide the framework for the draft Strategic Action Plan. These statements are not set in stone, and can be refined or changed over time to ensure they continue to meet community needs.

Vision. The Vision Statement articulates what the public finds important about Parks and Recreation and wants to strive toward. Vision statements inspire, energize and create a mental picture of a community's aspirations.

Mission. The Mission Statement articulates Parks and Recreation's fundamental purpose and provides a roadmap for how the Department will achieve its vision. It describes what Parks and Recreation will do today to make the city a better place tomorrow.

Values. Values are qualities that represent the public and Parks and Recreation's highest priorities and beliefs. They describe in detail how Parks and Recreation values the community, its employees, and the environment.

Goal, Strategic Initiative, Action Strategy, and Task

The draft Plan is comprised of six goals, each with its own set of strategic initiatives, action strategies, and tasks. The Plan proceeds from a general to a detailed level: strategic initiatives describe higher level objectives and tasks outline very specific action steps.

For example:

GOAL I. Goals are areas where Parks and Recreation will focus over the five-year planning period. The draft Plan's goals are complementary and support the overall vision, mission, and values. There are six goals in the draft Plan (labeled I to VI).

A. Strategic Initiatives are specific topics within each goal that Parks and Recreation will focus on to achieve that particular goal. There are four to six strategic initiatives within each goal (labeled A to F).

1. **Action Strategies** are the specific steps Parks and Recreation will take to accomplish the strategic initiatives and goals. For the final plan, action strategies will be SMART (specific, measurable, action-orientated, realistic, and time stamped) and provide clear direction on what needs to be accomplished within the five-year implementation period. There are two to seven action strategies under each strategic initiative (numbered one to seven).

i. **Tasks** are more detailed assignments within action strategies. Tasks are also SMART. Tasks are numbered i through x. Not every action strategy has a task.

SEATTLE PARKS AND RECREATION STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN: 2008-2012

Building for Tomorrow, Today



SEATTLE PARKS AND RECREATION'S VISION, MISSION & VALUES

Vision

Creating community through People, Parks, and Programs

Mission

Seattle Parks and Recreation will work with all citizens to be good stewards of our environment, and to provide safe and welcoming opportunities to play, learn, contemplate, and build community.

Service Delivery Values

People

- Strengthen relationships and sense of community
- Provide accessible, safe, and welcoming spaces to all people and communities
- Promote diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Deliver outstanding customer service

Parks

- Enhance ecological preservation and environmental sustainability
- Continue the preservation of the Olmsted legacy

Programs

- Encourage health and fitness
- Provide opportunities for lifelong play, creativity, learning, and discovery
- Strengthen accountability for projects and programs

Potential Options for Themes Section

- *Summary of the theme*
- *Discussion of each theme and why it is important, specifically how it helps Parks and Recreation accomplish its overall vision*
- *Summary of the Goals/Strategic Initiatives/Strategies that represent the theme*
- *Graphic representation of the theme throughout the document*
- *Others?*

Guiding Plan Themes – Under Development

These Guiding Themes constitute fundamental underpinnings which run through the Plan's Goals, Strategic Initiatives, Action Strategies and Tasks.

Fostering Effective Partnerships

Seattle Parks and Recreation recognizes that many partners are necessary to support our public land, facilities, and programs. In some cases, partners may be better able to leverage expertise, skills, and resources to provide a program or service. Specific partnerships opportunities are identified throughout the Plan; Goal VI includes overall management strategies for partnerships.

Communication and Trust

Seattle Parks and Recreation is committed to improving communication with the public, other City departments, and City leadership.

Race and Social Justice

Seattle Parks and Recreation fully supports the Mayor's and the community's commitment to Race and Social Justice issues.

Youth

Seattle Parks and Recreation recognizes our critical role in the development of Seattle's youth and teens.

Capacity-Building

This Strategic Action Plan, combined with new department leadership, represents a new era for Parks and Recreation. To meet the changing needs of Seattle's diverse population, we will need to build capacity within the organization and among our team members.

Others?

Summary of Plan: Goals and Strategic Initiatives

GOAL I: STEWARD SEATTLE'S PARKS AND OPEN SPACES FOR LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY

- A. Enhance citywide planning for parks and open space
- B. Increase restoration efforts of Seattle's natural ecosystem
- C. Honor the Olmsted vision and plan to connect people to nature
- D. Revitalize Center City parks
- E. Develop and maintain partnerships to enhance Seattle's parks and open spaces

GOAL II: PROVIDE RECREATION AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES THAT CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT OF HEALTH AND FITNESS, ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY, CREATIVITY, DIVERSITY, AND FUN

- A. Encourage healthy and active lifestyles
- B. Foster environmental appreciation and enjoyment through programming
- C. Promote creativity through opportunities in arts, culture, and imaginative, improvisational play
- D. Develop Programs that Build and Support Community
- E. Integrate Health, Environmental Stewardship, and Creativity into Recreation Programming
- F. Acquire and Develop Facilities to Support Community Recreational Needs
- G. Develop Recreation Management Policies and Evaluation Criteria

GOAL III: ACTIVELY ENGAGE AND BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH SEATTLE'S DIVERSE POPULATION

- A. Establish and implement new approaches to outreach and relationship building
- B. Effectively communicate Parks and Recreation services
- C. Provide opportunities for volunteers and community stewardship projects
- D. Implement customer service standards
- E. Build organizational capacity for public engagement

GOAL IV: MAINTAIN PARKS AND RECREATION'S LAND AND FACILITIES

- A. Maintain parks and facilities to enrich the recreational experience of patrons
- B. Ensure public safety at parks and facilities
- C. Expand green management practices to reduce Parks and Recreation's carbon footprint
- D. Continue the development of a strategic asset ,management plan

GOAL V: DEVELOP TEAM CAPACITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

- A. Adapt human resources practices and processes to align with evolving organizational priorities
- B. Develop and implement equitable hiring processes
- C. Increase opportunities for professional development and team learning
- D. Promote staff health and safety

GOAL VI: STRENGTHEN ORGANIZATIONAL SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES

- A. Identify partnerships that support efficient and effective service and program delivery
- B. Refine Parks and Recreation's organization to deliver quality services
- C. Develop a comprehensive and integrated management information system
- D. Evaluate fees and charges policies for programs and services
- E. Build on the Citywide Emergency Management Plan and prepare Parks for citywide emergencies

GOAL I: STEWARD SEATTLE'S PARKS AND OPEN SPACES FOR LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY

Parks and Recreation will sustain the City's park lands and plan effectively for their future. We are committed to the preservation of park land and open space to conserve the community's natural legacy and contribute to the ecological health of the city. We will: plan for the future open space needs of the city; increase restoration of the urban forest and open space, with a focus on preservation through community partnerships; evaluate opportunities to build upon the Olmsted legacy; and seek ways to revitalize Center City parks.

A. Enhance Citywide Planning for Parks and Open Space

1. 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

2. Analyze system-wide needs and develop criteria for acquisition of new land, facilities, and fixed assets

- i. Conduct a citywide parks and open space analysis for 2010 and 2020, including future programming needs, demographic trends, and geographic distribution, that identifies the types and locations of park property (e.g., neighborhood park, wildlife corridor) and facilities (e.g., community centers, pools) that will be needed

A **Facility** is any structure on Parks and Recreation's land (e.g. community centers and comfort stations).

Fixed assets are equipment used to maintain, operate, and improve Parks and Recreation facilities and park space.

- ii. Establish acquisition and development criteria that include:
 - o Alignment with Parks and Recreation's vision, mission, and values
 - o Equitable geographic distribution
 - o Current and future costs associated with new park lands, including levels of staffing and other resources required for operation and maintenance
 - o Current and future benefits associated with acquiring facilities, such as an increased number of programming and revenue opportunities

3. Establish a public advisory group to evaluate park and open space needs citywide and recommend potential park and open space projects and funding options

- i. Evaluate potential funding options which may include a voter approved measure, private fund raising, grants, or other funding resources

4. Acquire and develop land and facilities actively in anticipation of projected system needs and demands

- i. Participate in Seattle Neighborhood Plan update processes with the public and other City departments
- ii. Periodically assess how well Parks and Recreation is meeting the community's needs and acquire additional land as needed and as funding becomes available

B. Increase Restoration Efforts of Seattle's Natural Ecosystem

1. Facilitate coordination with other City departments in expanding and maintaining the city's tree inventory and canopy

2. Plant and maintain trees to promote a healthy urban environment and reforestation

- i. Work with other City agencies to implement the [Urban Forest Management Plan](#)
- ii. Work with the Department of Planning and Development to implement the [Heritage Tree Program](#) for Parks and Recreation sites
- iii. Continue to develop and apply environmental measurements (e.g., carbon sequestration and storm water containment) for trees and ecosystems

Urban Forest Management Plan is a 30 year, Citywide plan with the goal of preserving and expanding the urban forest. <http://www.seattle.gov/trees/>

3. Increase planting of native species where appropriate and control invasive plant species

- i. Develop a native plant policy to improve plant diversity and reduce the use of invasives within the city's urban landscape and ecosystem constraints
- ii. Track and communicate progress in achieving restoration goals
- iii. Continue to work with other City departments, particularly Seattle Public Utilities and Seattle Department of Transportation, to achieve restoration goals

Native species are types of plants that naturally grow in a particular region, state, ecosystem, and habitat without direct or indirect human actions.

- iv. Enhance education efforts and outreach at the Environmental Learning Centers regarding invasive species removal and plant and tree selection

- v. Explore additional funding opportunities to remove invasive plant species

4. Develop a wildlife protection policy that explores designating parks as wildlife

sanctuaries and minimizes the effects of humans on wildlife

- i. Identify areas where native habitat should be improved to protect wildlife and enhance wildlife corridors
- ii. Work with appropriate state and local agencies to create and enhance wildlife corridors by supporting initiatives that improve environmental quality and ecosystem connections

5. Look for opportunities to protect, invest in, and restore Seattle’s water and shorelines

- i. Inventory current marine reserves and habitats and investigate opportunities to designate new marine reserves
- ii. Work with appropriate agencies and community organizations to protect and invest in the city’s watershed areas and investigate opportunities for daylighting creeks

C. Honor the **Olmsted Vision and Plan to Connect People to Nature**

1. Communicate the Olmsted Vision and Plan, including the location and current status of Olmsted parks

List of Olmsted Parks

- i. Develop a promotional plan to identify the locations, features, and benefits of Seattle’s Olmsted Plan parks

2. Evaluate Parks and Recreation’s progress in managing the Olmsted Plan

- i. Identify and implement management standards for historic Olmsted parks
- ii. Evaluate possibilities to enhance park and open space linkages that strengthen connections consistent with the 1903 Olmsted Plan

3. Continue to work with other City departments on a plan for green streets and parkways

The **Olmsted Plan** was created by the Olmsted Brothers at the turn of the last century and recognizes the need to preserve and protect Seattle’s spectacular natural landscape while providing open space and healthy recreational opportunities for its rapidly growing population. The Olmsted Brothers proposed a comprehensive citywide system of parks and boulevards that today is one of the most fully-realized systems of Olmsted planned landscapes in the country. (For more information, please see: <http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/parks/parkspaces/olmsted.htm>)

D. Revitalize Center City Parks

1. Implement a coordinated, citywide action plan to improve Center City parks, including management, safety, design, and maintenance, based on the **Downtown Parks Renaissance Plan**

- i. Continue to partner actively with the downtown community, including the Downtown Seattle Association and the Metropolitan Improvement District, to increase use of Center City parks
- ii. Develop a multi-year funding plan for investments in Center City parks
- iii. Evaluate and recommend options for facilities to serve families and youth living in the Center City

The **Downtown Parks Renaissance Plan** was developed in 2006 and outlines strategies to promote active use and safety at Center City parks.

<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/downtown.asp>

2. Assess the Center City area to identify opportunities for acquisition of more green space

- i. Explore with the Department of Planning and Development and private developers opportunities to acquire and develop parks and open space in the Center City
- ii. Participate with City agencies and community organizations in potential projects to enhance park and open spaces on the central waterfront

3. Explore options with Seattle City Light and other departments to co-locate facilities and/or open space (e.g., Parks and Recreation development at a substation)

4. Assess the impact of the pilot **Park Rangers Program** in terms of enhanced safety and enjoyment of Center City parks

The pilot **Park Rangers Program**, outlined in the Downtown Parks Renaissance Plan, places unarmed rangers in parks to provide an official presence and make residents and City workers feel more comfortable being in the parks. The rangers are able to issue tickets and enforce laws that allow the City to bar repeat troublemakers from City parks, but they must call police officers to deal with more difficult situations.

E. Develop and Maintain Partnerships to Enhance Seattle's Parks and Open Spaces

1. Support **Green Seattle Partnership** goals to restore Seattle's forested parklands

- i. Expand volunteer programs across the city that support the Green Seattle Partnership
- ii. Seek funding for the long-term maintenance component of the Green Seattle Partnership

The **Green Seattle Partnership** with the Cascade Land Conservancy was created to restore 2,500 acres of forested parkland by 2025. The Partnership envisions a city with diverse, invasive-free, sustainable, forested parklands.
<http://www.greenSeattle.org>

2. Continue to partner with the **Seattle Parks Foundation**

- i. Collaborate with the Seattle Parks Foundation on their strategic plan
- ii. Explore additional opportunities with the Seattle Parks Foundation to support the acquisition, construction, landscaping, and restoration of parks and facilities

3. Continue to encourage and support volunteer programs that enhance park land and restoration efforts

- i. Develop a plan to enhance the recruitment and involvement of volunteers in restoration
- ii. Target youth in restoration volunteer efforts

The **Seattle Parks Foundation** is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to improving and expanding Seattle's parks and green spaces.
<http://www.seattleparksfoundation.org/>

4. Identify new partnerships that enhance Seattle's parks and open spaces

GOAL II: PROVIDE RECREATION AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Parks and Recreation will provide recreation opportunities that support physical fitness and health. Our programs and services encourage health and fitness for individuals and families and promote lifelong play, discovery, creativity, and learning. We will focus on: encouraging health and wellness; promoting environmental appreciation and enjoyment; supporting arts, culture, and imaginative play; and evaluation and improvement of all recreation programming.

A. Encourage Healthy and Active Lifestyles

1. Encourage active lifestyles through ongoing improvement of existing facilities and development of staff and volunteers that promote health and fitness

- i. Evaluate opportunities to improve our fitness rooms, considering competition from other available facilities, community demand, geographic distribution, and potential sponsorships
- ii. Identify opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle recreation through the periodic closure of City streets

2. Encourage and create opportunities for healthy eating choices

- i. Offer more healthy alternatives during programs and in vending machines in our facilities

3. Include in the Code of Conduct a ban on smoking in parks

4. Encourage youth and teen participation in health and fitness programs

- i. Communicate the benefits of health and fitness and approaches to maintaining lifelong health for youth and teens
- ii. Negotiate a master agreement with Seattle Public Schools that encompasses current land use agreements between the City and Parks and Recreation
- iii. Investigate a potential partnership with Seattle Public Schools for non-varsity middle school athletics

5. Encourage health and fitness through Lifelong Recreation Programs in partnership with community centers, environmental learning centers, and other Parks programs

- i. Increase active recreation opportunities for people age 50+

6. Support programming and scheduling that increases recreational use throughout the city for people with disabilities

- i. Promote the Special Olympics
- ii. Market and expand therapeutic recreation opportunities

Lifelong Recreation Programs are for people who are 50 years and older

B. Foster Environmental Appreciation and Enjoyment Through Programming

1. Develop a comprehensive environmental education and engagement strategy that covers the full range of Parks and Recreation programs and facilities beyond environmental learning centers
2. Develop materials, such as maps and brochures, that support opportunities for the public to observe and enjoy nature
3. Develop and promote new programs and services at Environmental Learning Centers that reflect Parks and Recreation's stewardship and sustainability goals
4. Evaluate opportunities to partner further with environmental organizations such as the Nature Conservancy and the Audubon Society
5. Develop culturally appropriate programs that provide connections to nature and environmental education for people of color, immigrants, refugees, and other underserved populations
6. Continue and expand environmental education programs for youth and teens
 - i. Expand and continue the Outdoor Opportunities (O₂) program
 - ii. Develop a youth workforce program that builds knowledge and appreciation of the environment
 - iii. Partner with schools to offer environmental education opportunities

The **Outdoor Opportunities (O₂)** program is an outdoor expedition-level program designed to expose multi-ethnic teens to environmental education, urban conservation, and stewardship, while creating an environment for community leadership and empowerment.

<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/teens/O2/default.htm>

C. Promote Creativity Through Opportunities in Arts, Culture, and Imaginative, Improvisational Play

1. Encourage a basic understanding and appreciation of arts and culture
 - i. Provide arts and culture related programs and services that engage youth early in their development
 - ii. Provide multicultural opportunities for people of all ages to engage in music, theater, and visual and performing arts
 - iii. Encourage a diverse mix of amateur and professional artists who perform and provide benefits to the community

Did you know:

- Seattle Parks and Recreation has six performing and visual arts facilities, including: the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center, the Community Theater at Warren G. Magnuson Park, and the Alki Arts Studio
- Seattle parks are home to two museums, the Seattle Asian Art Museum in Volunteer Park and the Museum of History and Industry in McCurdy Park

2. Continue to collaborate and explore new arts and culture programming opportunities

- i. Coordinate with the Mayor's Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs and other public and private agencies, arts organizations, and schools

3. Provide opportunities that enable the public to experience Seattle's rich ethnic and cultural diversity

4. Create opportunities for unstructured play to encourage imagination and self-motivation

- i. Evaluate current unstructured play opportunities at all the community centers
- ii. Establish design standards that encourage unstructured play for both new and current parks and open spaces

Unstructured, creative, imaginative play occurs when participants use the available landscape, facilities or equipment for spontaneous, creative expression.

D. Develop Programs that Build and Support Community

1. Partner with other City departments and organizations to create a citywide strategy that supports youth and teen development

- i. Work with other City agencies, nonprofits, and community members to create and implement a prevention, maintenance, and intervention program for youth
- ii. Work with community police teams, facility supervisors, crew chiefs, and others to develop standard approaches to managing prevention, maintenance, and intervention for youth-related activities
- iii. Work with partner agencies to offer their services and resources at Teen Centers and Late Night programs
- iv. Create programs that build self esteem and other developmental assets needed for youth to make positive choices

Prevention, Maintenance, and Intervention recognizes that different strategies are needed to ensure that all young people grow safely and successfully into adulthood. Prevention models develop internal strength, commitments, and values young people need to guide their choices, priorities, and decisions. Maintenance models reinforce prevention models and provide experiences that surround youth with support, empowerment, and constructive use of time. Intervention models assist staff with tools in managing conflict and, when necessary, involve legal enforcement.

2. Identify immigrant and refugee community recreation and program needs

- i. Develop a plan to work with community centers and other organizations to reach out and engage in discussions with immigrant and refugee community members to determine specific recreation and program needs
- ii. Determine when it is necessary to have separate programs and when Parks should try to incorporate immigrant and refugee programs into community-wide programs
- iii. Develop a plan to work with local ethnic groups to encourage and support special events that promote diversity as a community asset

- iv. Partner with the Department of Neighborhoods to share resources and carry out ongoing, sustainable outreach to community groups

3. Develop a plan and programs that support intergenerational and family-oriented recreation opportunities

- i. Develop additional recreation opportunities that allow family members to participate together, including hours that suit working families
- ii. Create opportunities for families to engage in unstructured play

4. Develop and implement a plan to offer services in coordination with Senior Center programs

- i. Evaluate methods to establish the co-location of targeted senior centers with community centers

5. Increase the number of programs and services for people with disabilities

- i. Increase the number of programs and services available to youth with disabilities
- ii. Develop programs where people with and without disabilities can participate together

6. Expand programming that brings neighborhoods and communities together in public gathering places

E. Integrate Health, Environmental Stewardship, and Creativity into Recreation Programming

1. Identify areas where environmental sustainability and health and fitness initiatives can be integrated

- i. Develop and implement a **Green Calorie Program** to combine environmental sustainability with healthy activities
- 2. Collaborate with Seattle Public Schools to provide integrated programs and facilities that support academic and personal achievement youth and teens**
- i. Continue to offer homework help and computer learning centers to youth

The **Green Calorie Program** promotes physical activity and wellness programs with environmentally smart activities. A green calorie is burned while performing activities that do not leave a carbon footprint and enrich the natural environment. For example, an individual may burn green calories when pulling out invasive plant species by hand or riding a bike to a neighborhood clean-up event.

F. Acquire and Develop Facilities to Support Community Recreational Needs

1. Investigate opportunities to provide new facilities for sports and activities that promote healthy lifestyles

i. Investigate opportunities for partnerships or co-location in the provision of recreation facilities

ii. Continue to implement the [Citywide 2007 Skatepark Plan](#)

- o Identify and site specific skatepark projects for the next five years
- o Seek funding for a major skatepark in South Seattle

The [Citywide 2007 Skatepark Plan](#) identifies a network of safe, legal places throughout the City, where people of all ages, races, and genders can enjoy skateboarding. The plan recommends a tiered system of sizes and types of skateparks that are most appropriate for specific Seattle neighborhoods.

<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/Skatepark>

2. Evaluate trends, sporting industry data, and community input to encourage and provide opportunities for emerging sports and fitness activities

i. Evaluate the demand and, if needed, develop youth sports leagues for new and emerging sports

Emerging Sports and Fitness Activities are those sports relatively new to Seattle Parks and Recreation. In recent years these have included Ultimate Frisbee, BMX bike courses, cricket, rugby, and lacrosse.

G. Develop Recreation Management Policies and Evaluation Criteria

1. Establish measurable outcomes for recreation as a whole and for individual programs

i. Develop and implement a formal process for routinely evaluating all existing and future programs to ensure that there is an identified outcome that is aligned with our vision, mission, and values and that verifies the need for the program within the community

2. Evaluate Parks and Recreation's current programs, services, and outcomes

i. Review existing program participation data to determine community needs, such as hours of use, age, etc.

ii. Identify and examine the demographic composition, trends, and needs of the community within the service area of each community center

iii. Avoid program duplication by inventorying similar programs provided by other organizations

iv. Review best management practices of organizations offering similar programs and services to determine if different approaches would increase our success

3. Develop and implement systems to collect and examine use data for selected Parks and Recreation services.

4. Evaluate the effectiveness of existing programs for youth

- i. Establish evaluation criteria, e.g. pregnancy rates, school drop- out rates.
- ii. Audit the Department of Social and Health Services licensed child care programs in Parks and Recreation facilities
- iii. Establish baseline participation data and work to increase engagement of youth in citywide athletics programs

5. Continue to foster a strong relationship with the **Associated Recreation Council and local community councils**

6. Align Associated Recreation Council and Parks and Recreation policies for programs and service delivery

- i. Ensure that the Associated Recreation Council's Advisory Councils reflect community demographics and diverse recreation interests
- ii. Continue implementation of the **Associated Recreation Council Modernization Agreement**, including a program evaluation system and marketing campaign

7. Develop systems for making park and facility scheduling and registration more accessible and transparent to the public

- i. Fully implement the CLASS system to enhance the ease of registration and scheduling
- ii. Ensure online registration for all programs, regardless of fees or fee structure
- iii. Evaluate field and other facility reservation policies to increase opportunities for new users to schedule spaces
- iv. Evaluate and modify scheduling processes for programs and services to maximize community use and ensure coordination system-wide
- v. Evaluate schedulable spaces to expand the permitted uses
- vi. Develop a plan that promotes the use of facilities during off-peak hours

The **Associated Recreation Council (ARC)** is the coordinating board for the Advisory Councils which provide programming in Parks and Recreation facilities. In partnership with Seattle Parks and Recreation, ARC provides policy direction and standardized accounting for the Advisory Councils.

The **Associated Recreation Council Modernization Agreement** is an agreement between Parks and Recreation and the Associated Recreation Council to plan and implement recreational activities, lifelong learning, and other programs for the public. It outlines roles and responsibilities with respect to program management, human resources, financial management, and marketing and development.

<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/Arc/default.htm>

GOAL III: ACTIVELY ENGAGE AND BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH SEATTLE'S DIVERSE POPULATION

Parks and Recreation strives to build and sustain trusting relationships with the public and all stakeholders. We recognize and support the tremendous cultural and economic value diversity brings to our city. Over the next five years, we will focus on ensuring that the public has the information they need to use our facilities, parks, programs, and services, and that staff have the information needed from the public to make sound policy, budget, legislative, and program decisions. Such information will help ensure that all interactions with the public result in more productive relationships and greater mutual understanding and respect.

A. Establish and Implement New Approaches to Outreach and Relationship Building

1. Establish public outreach policies for inclusionary, racially and culturally appropriate engagement with the public

- i. Identify best practices for Parks and Recreation's community outreach efforts
- ii. Amend the Public Involvement Policy to include strategies for appropriate **follow through** with participants and the larger community
- iii. Create a process for ongoing communication, engagement, and collaboration with communities throughout Seattle that extends beyond specific projects or issues
- iv. Identify tools to help design and evaluate outreach, considering racial, cultural, socioeconomic, and logistical barriers that discourage participation in public processes, programs, and services
- v. Change policies and common practices when they are determined to be inconsistent with public engagement and race and social justice values
- vi. Coordinate with citywide efforts to reach communities of color
- vii. Complete an inventory of documents needing to be translated into languages other than English and implement their translation

Seattle's Diverse Population encompasses over 80 different ethnic groups who speak more than 100 different languages. The people who live, work, and play in Seattle experience this diversity as a source of learning, enrichment and growth.

Follow through is Parks and Recreation's efforts to maintain two-way communication with the public, including publishing public meeting summaries and providing information about how public comments are used and considered. Parks and Recreation understands the importance of follow through communication and is working to improve these practices.

2. Partner with the Department of Neighborhoods to engage the community

- i. Coordinate with DON for use of existing outreach and community building information networks
- ii. Connect and build relationships among Community Center Coordinators, Teen Development Leaders, and Neighborhood Service Center Coordinators

3. Identify people who don't use Parks and Recreation's programs and facilities

- i. Develop strategies to invite people who don't use Parks and Recreation programs and facilities to use them
- ii. Develop and implement approaches to reach youth who do not currently use Parks and Recreation facilities and programs

4. Develop a plan to work with stakeholders in the design, delivery, and evaluation of Parks and Recreation's programs and services

- i. Develop a process where an analysis of stakeholders is conducted before making decisions about programs or policies
- ii. Create and regularly update a stakeholder inventory that includes contact information, historical relationships with Parks and Recreation, and their primary interests and concerns of each stakeholder

A **stakeholder** is an individual, community, group, or organization who has interest in, is affected by, or who supports or enriches our budget, policy, legislative, or program decisions.

B. Effectively Communicate Parks and Recreation Services

1. Inventory and evaluate existing marketing systems and protocols

2. Develop a marketing management strategy

3. Develop a cohesive Parks and Recreation story and key messages

- i. Promote Parks and Recreation's vision, mission, and values clearly and consistently in marketing materials
- ii. Develop a strategic communications plan to share Parks and Recreation's story, successes and challenges, and to guide outreach activities and promotion activities
- iii. Implement the communication plan broadly, using the web and other media

4. Use marketing to increase public participation and knowledge of Parks and Recreation's facilities, services, and programs

Marketing is Parks and Recreation efforts to provide information and engage the public to increase the community's awareness of opportunities to use the system.

- i. Engage in innovative marketing activities that keep traditional patrons engaged and attract new ones
- ii. Ensure that all facilities have information available about their facility offerings through signage, brochures, catalogs, and fliers
- iii. Develop and distribute maps of park trails through community centers, educational learning centers, and through the website
- iv. Partner with nonprofits and other City agencies to post signage, brochures, catalogs, and fliers to promote our parks, facilities, programs, and services
- v. Develop a plan to work with the local media, including daily and weekly newspapers, blogs, websites, radio, and television, to frequently feature a park, community center, program, or other service
- vi. Evaluate opportunities to communicate with and reach youth, including use of social networking sites like MySpace

5. Improve Parks and Recreation's website to provide broader and more effective communication

- i. Continue to make the Parks and Recreation's website inclusive, user-friendly, and searchable, particularly for youth
- ii. Continue to expand the Parks and Recreation website, including online registration capabilities, to provide a quick and easy way to find information about all programs, services, and facilities
- iii. Maintain periodic capital project status information on Parks and Recreation's website

C. Provide Opportunities for Volunteers and Community Stewardship Projects

1. Develop an overarching management protocol outlining effective training and use of volunteers

- i. Continue to provide a range of volunteer opportunities for people and organizations who want to share their time, energy, and resources to improve recreation programs and parks
- ii. Evaluate the need to coordinate volunteer management across programs and services
- iii. Develop a database to organize volunteer contact information and volunteer history

2. Develop consistent volunteer orientation and/or training programs to be implemented prior to volunteer activities

3. Expand the existing volunteer recognition program

4. Create a department-wide strategy for youth volunteering, including service learning projects

- i. Evaluate opportunities to provide more volunteer experiences for adults who have the skills and resources to engage with youth

D. Implement Customer Service Standards

1. Clearly identify appropriate channels for the public to obtain information and provide feedback, opinions, and perspectives

- i. Establish avenues for “open door” public communication, including designating a comments email address, phone line, mail address, web form, and paper form at each facility
- ii. Update Parks and Recreation Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for posting to the website
- iii. Assess and identify needed improvements to telephone customer service protocols
- iv. Participate in a Citywide evaluation of a 311 information system

2. Develop and implement a two-way communication policy for Parks and Recreation to acknowledge and respond to all customer comments

- i. Assess internal policies, procedures, common practices, and behaviors to ensure they result in excellent customer service
- ii. Clearly communicate response timelines and who is responsible for responding to public requests for information
- iii. Identify how other organizations deliver information in non-traditional and creative ways, and best practice approaches

3. Create and implement a welcoming environment for immigrant and refugee populations in parks, facilities, and programming

- i. Enhance customer service by training and developing staff in multicultural communication and understanding
- ii. Actively recruit new employees from within immigrant and refugee communities
- iii. Examine and update current policies to be inclusive and respectful of immigrant and refugee cultures
- iv. Assess the current signage policy to ensure appropriate multilingual information is provided

E. Build Organizational Capacity for Public Engagement

1. Train staff to strive for excellence in their relationships with patrons

- i. Communicate to all staff that they are ambassadors for Parks and Recreation
- ii. Provide staff training in customer service for new employees
- iii. Provide training for staff who are assigned public engagement responsibilities, specifically in appropriate responses to challenging situations and dynamics
- iv. Provide staff training to respond to non-English speaking community members
- v. Train staff to create awareness of the special needs of people with disabilities and create opportunities for inclusion
- vi. Identify employees who are multilingual and are willing to serve as a translation resource

2. Build public engagement and customer service duties and expectations into employee job descriptions and accountability agreements

3. Increase awareness and consistency in public engagement activities by maintaining a user-friendly master calendar of such activities for internal and external use

GOAL IV: MAINTAIN PARKS AND RECREATION'S LAND AND FACILITIES

Parks and Recreation will manage its land and facilities in a manner that contributes to public pride and a high quality of life in Seattle. Parks and Recreation values ecological preservation, environmental sustainability, and the preservation of the Olmsted legacy, and incorporates these values when making decisions over how land and facilities will be maintained and managed. Over the next five years, we will focus on: planning and preventive maintenance; ensuring public safety at parks and facilities; expanding green management practices for carbon reduction; developing a strategic asset management plan; and preparing for citywide emergencies.

A. Maintain Parks and Facilities to Enrich the Recreational Experience of Patrons

1. Evaluate maintenance efforts to determine appropriate staffing levels

- i. Collect internal data, such as staff hours dedicated to maintenance, equipment used for maintenance, and how frequently a facility or park is cleaned, to determine current maintenance levels
- ii. Determine the hours needed to maintain a specific type of facility, based on industry standards
- iii. Examine the number of **productive hours** a full-time Parks and Recreation employee has available annually for maintenance duties

Productive Hours include the time staff spends at their assigned tasks, and does not include travel time to the job site, sick leave, vacation, or time spent as a result of an event.

2. Reaffirm consistent maintenance standards for all Parks and Recreation facilities

- i. Create measurable goals for key indicators, such as litter pickup, recycling, maintenance response requests, and response times

3. Develop a Maintenance Management System

- i. Develop criteria for maintenance needs, including needs that are legally mandated, are required for safety, reduce operations and maintenance costs, respect historic preservation, and/or improve a park or facility
- ii. Identify and categorize current and ongoing park and facility renovation needs
- iii. Create maintenance schedules that encourage preventive maintenance to ensure effective use of public dollars

Did you know:

- Seattle Parks and Recreation maintains and operates 488 facilities, totaling more than 1 million square feet

4. **Assess costs associated with upgrading the nine facilities not upgraded in the three most recent levies: community centers at Hiawatha, Green Lake, Jefferson, Loyal Heights, Queen Anne, Magnolia, and Rainier Beach; the gym at Van Asselt Community Center, Rainier Beach Pool, and the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center**
5. **Continue implementation of approved multi-year plans to replace, upgrade, and maintain golf courses, playfields, field lighting, play areas, irrigation, landscape, and similar critical assets**
6. **Develop a comprehensive policy to reclaim encroachments of private property on Parks and Recreation's land**

B. Ensure Public Safety at Parks and Facilities

1. Evaluate the safety of parks and facilities using available statistics

- i. Monitor and evaluate police crime data, Parks and Recreation incident reports, Parks and Recreation work orders, visitor and staff complaints, and Parks and Recreation security logs to determine which parks and facilities have real and perceived safety challenges

2. Identify and implement remedies to address safety concerns

- i. Identify and recommend levels of staff necessary to increase presence and improve perceived and real levels of security (e.g., front line and maintenance staff and park rangers)
- ii. Coordinate on preliminary design of new parks and facilities with the Police and Fire Departments
- iii. Evaluate opportunities in parks to improve lighting and security measures, such as cameras, and activate parks by increasing programming efforts where appropriate
- iv. Establish standard lighting levels for different event lighting in parks and assess individual parks to ensure appropriate lighting levels

C. Expand Green Management Practices to Reduce Parks and Recreation's Carbon Footprint

1. Define the components of an "ideal green park," with evaluation criteria supporting sustainability, such as water consumption and energy use

- i. Continue to implement, where possible, elements of an "ideal green park" into current and future parks
- ii. Track monthly utility consumption data for all parks and buildings
- iii. Establish target green consumption levels and develop methods by which to meet the targets

An Ideal Green Park represents environmentally sustainable maintenance and development standards that contribute to the city's environmental health and climate stability. Examples are the use of high efficiency lights in community centers and drought resistant plants in parks.

2. Ensure that grounds maintenance activities incorporate green practices

- i. Continue to reduce the use of pesticides
- ii. Support efficient watering practices, including an evaluation of the potential for gray water reuse
- iii. Continue to install high efficiency fixtures in all facilities
- iv. Test and evaluate innovative technologies that will reduce environmental impacts

3. Manage equipment to reduce environmental impacts

- i. Develop purchasing guidelines with other City departments that include noise and emission standards for landscaping and maintenance
- ii. Evaluate equipment needs and priority levels to support long-term energy efficiency
- iii. Evaluate all installed mechanical equipment against lowest life-cycle cost methodology

4. Explore options for reducing vehicle miles traveled and equipment run-times

5. Develop design standards and specifications that require contractors to use green construction techniques

6. Strive to achieve LEED Gold with new construction and LEED Silver equivalents with renovations

LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is a green building rating system developed by the U.S. Green Building Council in 2000 that is the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of high performance green buildings. LEED certification is available in four progressive levels: Certified, Silver, Gold, and Platinum.

7. Publicize green activities to model green practices for the public

D. Continue the Development of a Strategic Asset Management Plan

1. Build upon and integrate work from the Strategic Asset Management Committee to encompass land, facility, and fixed asset management

- i. Report current and future condition assessments at a detailed level for selected land, facilities, and assets

2. Assign responsibility and accountability for developing the Strategic Asset Management Plan, as well as the amount of investment needed

- i. Dedicate staff and resources to update, enter, and analyze data

3. Ensure that the Strategic Asset Management Plan is up to date, relevant, and integrated into other systems and decision-making processes

- i. Perform best practices research for asset management, and data collection and analysis

The Strategic Asset Management Committee is a citywide group working to establish an optimal system for managing City assets.

- ii. Assess and improve the current inventory of lands, facilities, and assets to be included in the Strategic Asset Management Plan
- iii. Establish benchmarks that are routinely communicated to staff
- iv. Build on relationships with other City departments to ensure compatibility among different information systems, standardization of data, and open communication

4. Improve Asset Planning and Financial Analysis

- i. Develop systems that enable the Strategic Asset Management Plan to inform and guide the Capital Improvement Plan
- ii. Develop and use lifecycle costing for decision-making
- iii. Develop and implement end-of-useful-life divestiture or demolition criteria for facilities

5. Develop a lifecycle-based facilities plan to ensure ongoing improvements and updates to facilities and fixed assets

- i. Develop standards that strengthen and ensure long range maintenance
- ii. Develop and implement a plan that encompasses ongoing and preventive maintenance, capital improvement needs, major replacement strategies, and evaluation for divestiture or demolition
- iii. Identify trends in program and service delivery that may have an impact on maintenance and operations for an asset or facility, and vice versa
- iv. Outline a process for asset management planning and related maintenance schedules to be communicated clearly and consistently to staff and the public

End-of-Useful-Life Divestiture or Demolition Criteria provide guidelines for determining when maintenance costs for a facility are significantly higher than the value of the community benefit from retaining the facility.

GOAL V: DEVELOP TEAM CAPACITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Parks and Recreation will develop employee and workforce capacity and an organizational culture that provides the internal foundation to serve the public successfully. We consider employees our most important resource in carrying out our vision, mission, and values. Over the next five years, Parks and Recreation will focus on providing equal access and multiple avenues for employees to learn and grow by providing opportunities for professional development and team learning; ensuring human resource practices are aligned with desired organizational changes; the promotion of health and safety; and the implementation of a workforce succession plan.

A. Adapt Human Resource Practices and Processes to Align with Evolving Organizational Priorities

- 1. Define valued qualities and competencies for all employees, including awareness of race and social justice issues, public engagement, and environmental responsibility**
- 2. Ensure that these values are integrated into all employment transactions, such as recruitment, training, and informal and formal performance evaluations**
 - i. Ensure that managers and supervisors are held accountable for communicating and incorporating these values into behaviors and actions
- 3. Ensure that all employees demonstrate a commitment to race and social justice issues and understand them as they relate to customer service, public engagement, and the development and delivery of programs and services**
 - i. Develop performance measurements to assess progress on race and social justice issues

B. Develop and Implement Equitable Hiring Processes

- 1. Develop a recruitment plan for temporary, part-time, and full-time positions**
 - i. Work with local community colleges and technical institutions to ensure the provision of training and education that effectively prepares people for Parks and Recreation jobs
 - ii. Increase youth recruitment, particularly for temporary and part-time employment positions, by working with schools
 - iii. Build on existing relationships at community centers to actively recruit people of color and immigrants for jobs
 - iv. Determine the skills needed for vacant, soon-to-be-vacant, or hard-to-fill positions and actively recruit in those areas through increased participation in job fairs, internships, and job shadowing opportunities
 - v. Increase opportunities for people of color and immigrants to obtain jobs with Parks and Recreation by evaluating how, when, and where Parks and Recreation advertises for part-

time and temporary positions

- vi. Allow applicants with language barriers equal access to Parks and Recreation jobs

2. Ensure greater transparency and consistency in hiring processes

- i. Strive to fill vacant positions within the 90-day hiring window
- ii. Improve the application process to ensure accessibility to job openings (e.g. an online application system)
- iii. Implement fair selection processes with out-of-classification (OOC) assignments and permanent and temporary positions
- iv. Provide greater employment opportunities for temporary employees

An **Out-of-Classification (OOC)** assignment is the temporary assignment of an eligible employee to perform the normal ongoing duties and responsibilities associated with a higher-paying title.

3. Develop a standard orientation process for temporary and regular staff

- i. Work with supervisors and trainers to develop an orientation manual for each employment category, which can be tailored or modified to fit specific job functions
- ii. Include an overview of Parks and Recreation's vision, mission, and values in the orientation process and manual
- iii. Examine existing orientation procedures to determine if they are being implemented and how they can be improved

C. Increase Opportunities for Professional Development and Team Learning

- 1. Create a plan for legal, mandatory, professional development, and technical skills training
- 2. Evaluate current training opportunities and identify employee and department needs
- 3. Ensure that training and growth are aligned with Parks and Recreation vision, mission, values, and goals, including race and social justice and public engagement

Did you know:

- Seattle Parks and Recreation employs over 1,000 people ranging from teen development leaders to construction and maintenance crews and landscape architects to summer-time lifeguards.

4. Provide clear information to staff about professional development and advancement opportunities

- i. Inventory and communicate current training, mentorship, and job shadowing opportunities and identify gaps or areas of improvement based on need and demand
- ii. Develop a format in which professional development opportunities are routinely and regularly presented (e.g. newsletters, emails, bulletins)
- iii. Expand **apprenticeship** opportunities to other trades where possible, including painter, heavy equipment operator, boilermaker; and explore options for apprenticeships in non-traditional areas

Apprenticeship combines on the job training with related supplemental instruction to train employees for journey level positions.

5. Provide more cross-training opportunities across divisions

- i. Develop protocols for current and new applicants to list their skills (e.g. foreign languages, technical skills, etc.) to be put into a database designed for ease of access and information extraction
- ii. Provide appropriate cross-training opportunities

6. Develop a review program in which employees can give feedback to supervisors and managers

- i. Outline supervisory roles and responsibilities and the resources and support available for staff development and communication
- ii. Provide clear direction, training, and feedback to supervisors about how to appropriately conduct meaningful performance evaluations to achieve accuracy and consistency
- iii. Provide safe, respectful environments for employees to provide supervisory feedback

D. Promote Staff Health and Safety

1. Ensure that safety training is relevant and specific to job duties

2. Communicate safety resources to staff

- i. Develop a plan for **Parks and Recreation Security** that positively affects programs, services, patrons, staff, and facilities
- ii. Provide staff training on safety and safety resources
- iii. Increase Parks and Recreation Security's availability to Parks and Recreation staff and communicate their capacity

Parks and Recreation Security is the staff group assigned to provide security services for parks and facilities.

3. Provide incentives that help employees to adopt healthier lifestyles

- i. Explore options for providing a reduced fee or free access to swimming pools, weight facilities, or related programs

GOAL VI: STRENGTHEN ORGANIZATIONAL SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES

Parks and Recreation will model efficient stewardship of public dollars by strengthening our organizational systems and structures. We value the efficient and effective management of land, facilities, staff, services, and partnerships. Over the next five years, we will focus on: identifying best business models to support efficient and effective service and program delivery; optimizing our organizational model; developing a Management Information System that supports delivery of programs and services; developing recreation management and evaluation policies; and evaluating the existing fees and charges policies. We recognize that a key to maintaining positive relationships with policy makers and communities is the achievement of this goal.

A. Identify **Partnerships** that Support Efficient and Effective Service and Program Delivery

1. Define categories for all levels of partnerships, including **sponsorships**, operating agreements, and service provider contracts
2. Inventory and categorize current Parks and Recreation partnerships
3. Develop an active approach and the institutional capacity to build and nurture partnerships with private entities, public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and community groups
4. Develop measurable goals and objectives for the partnership program as a whole
 - i. Review and revise the Request for Proposals process and policies for entering and renewing partnerships and contracts to include the following criteria:
 - o How well the agreement aligns with our overall mission, vision, and values
 - o Potential costs and benefits to the public and to Parks and Recreation from the agreement
 - o Potential impacts on represented and non-represented employees
 - ii. Implement a plan for ongoing evaluation of the partnership program
 - iii. Continue to provide equal opportunities for women and minority businesses

A **Partnership** is a working relationship with another organization that has compatible values and goals and which results in mutual benefits. It may or may not be subject to a formal written agreement. The partnership may be formed around a single activity or event or it may be long-term and multi-faceted.

A **Sponsorship** is a relationship in which the sponsor is providing financial, in-kind, or other type of support for a park program or facility in exchange for the opportunity to have themselves recognized.

5. Identify opportunities to partner with organizations that can more effectively provide services, by leveraging skills and resources

- i. Research trends in the profession and among other service providers to assess opportunities for additional partnerships and contractual relationships
- ii. Perform a cost-benefit analysis of activities that could potentially be more effectively provided through partnerships and vendors

B. Refine Parks and Recreation's Organization to Deliver Quality Services

1. Evaluate Parks and Recreation's organizational structure and make changes to enhance the ability to deliver quality programs and services

- i. Conduct a best practices assessment of successful and innovative organization models, including the organization of information technology functions
- ii. Organize Parks and Recreation to implement the Strategic Action Plan
- iii. Realign the Superintendent's Office to emphasize the importance of public engagement, policy analysis, and partnerships
- iv. Identify staff headquarters co-location options and the costs and benefits of co-location
- v. Evaluate the appropriate ratio of managers and supervisors to non-management staff

C. Develop a Comprehensive and Integrated Management Information System

1. Determine Parks and Recreation information system needs

- i. Determine what data need to be collected both internally and externally to support the Strategic Action Plan, decision making, management of operations, and performance measurement
- ii. Identify information system needs that support Strategic Action Plan implementation
- iii. Establish priorities for the integration of identified information system needs into ongoing planning efforts

2. Evaluate Parks and Recreation's existing information systems

- i. Update the existing information system inventory and categorize systems by owner, type of data collected, usefulness, and the estimated cost of each system's operation and maintenance
- ii. Prepare an overview of existing systems and propose opportunities for consolidation and long-term development

3. Develop and implement a Management Information System (MIS)

- i. Reprioritize information system needs, taking into consideration current data availability and factoring in system ownership and system condition

- ii. Examine the current funding structure to identify how much is currently spent on information systems and whether that amount is enough to address Parks and Recreation's needs
- iii. Continue the current strategy of leveraging citywide systems and services provided by the Department of Information Technology and the Department of Executive Administration to reduce costs and increase compatibility
- iv. Continually evaluate, update, and improve the MIS plan in light of changing technology and recreation and demographic trends
- v. Identify staff training and development needs related to the MIS Plan

D. Evaluate Fees and Charges Policies for Programs and Services

1. Evaluate current fee structures and establish fee policies that consider equity, cost recovery, consistency, and transparency to the public

- i. Conduct best practice research to determine how fees, structures, and rates are set in other park systems across the United States
- ii. Assess Parks and Recreation and Associated Recreation Council's existing price and cost recovery practices and policy frameworks
- iii. Examine different pricing options, including:
 - o Market-based and peak pricing strategies
 - o Consistent pricing across the city
 - o Pricing based on community/individuals' ability to pay
 - o Pricing at cost
 - o The benefits of the program or service to both individuals (direct benefits) and the entire community (community-wide benefits)
- iv. Communicate policies and processes for developing fees to the public, staff, and public officials
- v. Consider policies and standards for allowing advertisements in Parks and Recreation's brochures, facilities, website, etc.

2. Examine and update Parks and Recreation's scholarship and fee waiver policies

- i. Inventory current scholarship and fee reduction offerings and use figures
- ii. Allocate a set budget amount or determine a specified fee structure for scholarships
- iii. Evaluate current scholarship levels to determine if standardization is appropriate

E. Build On the Citywide Emergency Management Plan and Prepare Parks for Citywide Emergencies

- 1. Communicate clear lines of responsibility, communication protocols between staff and management, and resources to guide Parks and Recreation’s disaster response**
- 2. Develop an updated plan for how we will operate emergency shelters for disaster relief**
 - i. Work with the Office of Emergency Management, Seattle Public Schools, and other appropriate agencies to coordinate emergency management efforts
- 3. Provide disaster response training for staff**
- 4. Develop plans to address emergencies that may occur outside normal operating hours**
 - i. Strengthen communication channels to inform Parks and Recreation’s patrons of emergencies (e.g., overnight guests at Camp Long)

Sidebar: Parks’ Role in Emergency Management