



## Department Policy & Procedure

|                                     |                                   |                            |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Subject: Park Classification System |                                   | Number 060-P               |
|                                     |                                   | Effective November 1, 2009 |
|                                     |                                   | Supersedes                 |
| Approved:                           | Department:<br>Parks & Recreation | Page 1 of                  |

### 1.0 PURPOSE STATEMENT

Seattle Parks and Recreation recognizes the unique nature of each property it owns and is responsible for. The size of each property, its setting within the surrounding neighborhood, the amenities it provides to park visitors, its accessibility to the public, its soil, hydrology, vegetation, and habitat combine to make each property a unique asset. Understanding the uniqueness of each property, there is also a recognized benefit to categorizing park owned properties based on their similarities across a number of characteristics. The purpose of this policy and procedure is to establish a method for classifying the parks in Seattle Parks and Recreation. The classifications are driven by park use, purpose and size. This classification system serves the following purposes:

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

This classification scheme is not intended to serve as an inventory of individual assets (e.g. total acres of natural area or total number of athletic fields) because different combinations of the same assets appear in each park type, nor is it intended to be a naming policy. Lastly, for each park type, the list of desired or optional assets or programming opportunities is not intended to be inclusive of all potential assets or programs.

### 2.0 ORGANIZATIONS AFFECTED

2.1 Department of Parks and Recreation

### 3.0 POLICY

Seattle Parks and Recreation adopts the following park classifications as defined in Section 4.0 as well as the Parks Classification Assignments List dated October 20, 2009:

1. Triangles/Circles/Squares
2. Pocket Park
3. Downtown Park
4. Neighborhood Park
5. Community Park
6. Recreation Area
7. Natural Area/Greenbelt
8. Boulevards/Green Streets/Trails
9. Special-Use Park

#### 4.0 DEFINITIONS

|                               |  |   |
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| <b>4.1</b>                    | <b>TRIANGLES/CIRCLES/<br/>SQUARES</b>  | These small sites are typically composed of traffic islands or leftover pieces of land. They are often dedicated to Parks in the original plat rather than purchased for use. |
| <b>Physical</b>               |  |   |
| Size                          | Generally under 10,000 square feet (0.25 acres)  |   |
| Setting                       | Single Family Residential, Residential Urban Villages, Hub Urban Villages, Urban Center Villages, Downtown<br>Generally constructed on unused land between roads |   |
| Contributes to planning area  | No   |   |
| Usable Open Space requirement |  |   |
| <b>Built environment</b>      |  |   |
| Percent developed             | 100%   |   |
| Assets (desired)              | None   |   |
| Assets (optional)             | Benches  | Public Art  |
|                               | Lighting for safety  |   |
| Parking                       | Street, none   |   |
| <b>Natural Environment</b>    |  |   |
| Natural Area                  | No   |   |
| Environmental Benefits        | Possible green stormwater infrastructure   |   |
| <b>Programs</b>               |  |   |
| Programming (desired)         | None   |   |
| Programming (optional)        | None   |   |
| Geographic range of users     | People in the immediate vicinity (pedestrians, cyclists, drivers)  |   |

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| <b>4.2</b>   | <b>POCKET PARK</b>  | These are typically smaller developed sites that have been acquired to serve the immediate neighborhood as a small multi-purpose park. These parks are generally not large enough for significant programming or activity. They may incorporate utility infrastructure or a viewpoint. |  |
| <b>Physical</b>  |   |  |  |
| Size   | Generally between 2,500 sq. ft. and 10,000 sq. ft. (0.25 acres) – this refers primarily to the usable area of the park                                  |  |  |
| Setting  | Single Family Residential, Residential Urban Villages, Hub Urban Villages<br>Generally surrounded by residences, small commercial, non-arterial streets |  |  |
| Contributes to planning area Usable Open Space requirement | No, unless it exceeds 0.25 acres  |  |  |
| <b>Built environment</b>                                   |   |  |  |
| Percent developed  | 70-100%   |  |  |
| Assets (desired)   | Benches<br>Improved paths   | Plaza or grassy area for informal activity (no sports field)   |  |
| Assets (optional)  | Designed Landscape<br>Lighting for safety (rare)<br>Picnic table  | Play area<br>Public art<br>Viewpoint   |  |
| Parking  | Street  |  |  |
| <b>Natural Environment</b>                                 |   |  |  |
| Natural Area   | None  |  |  |
| Environmental Benefits                                     | Green stormwater infrastructure, native plants  |  |  |
| <b>Programs</b>  |   |  |  |
| Programming (desired)                                      | None  |  |  |
| Programming (optional)                                     | Small community gatherings  |  |  |
| Geographic range of users                                  | Immediate neighborhood – less than ¼ mile in distance   |  |  |

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| <b>4.3 DOWNTOWN PARK</b>                                   | <p>These are typically smaller developed sites located in Seattle’s Center City and other neighborhood centers. These areas provide a landscaped respite from busy downtown streets and often offer places to sit and space for performers and vendors. The 2006 Seattle Downtown Parks &amp; Public Spaces Task Force report identifies 24 downtown parks in three categories: 1) downtown destination parks, which are “signature parks of interest to the broad community”; 2) downtown neighborhood parks, where “neighborhood involvement in activities and programming...is most appropriate;” and 3) small public spaces or beauty spots, which are “small islands within the urban environment that present opportunities to enhance the city’s character and identity, and the public’s enjoyment of downtown, but are not large enough for substantial park facilities.”</p> |  |
| <b>Physical</b>  |  |  |
| Size   | Between 0.1 and 5 acres  |  |
| Setting  | <p>The 2006 Downtown Parks &amp; Public Spaces Task Force Report defines “downtown” as the area bounded by South Lake Union Park to the north, the International District to the south and Interstate 5 to the east. This document currently reflects those boundaries, although in the future the area defined “downtown” may shift as the city changes</p> <p>Generally surrounded by commercial buildings</p>   |  |
| Contributes to planning area Usable Open Space requirement | Only those over 10,000 square feet   |  |
| <b>Built environment</b>                                   |  |  |
| Percent developed  | 100%   |  |
| Assets (desired)   | Benches<br>Improved paths<br>Designed landscapes<br>Lighting for safety  | Plaza or level grassy area for informal activity (no sports field) |
| Assets (optional)  | Picnic tables<br>Play area   | Public art<br>Stage<br>Off-leash Area                              |
| Parking  | Street, none   |  |
| <b>Natural Environment</b>                                 |  |  |
| Natural Area   | None   |  |
| Environmental Benefits                                     | Possible green stormwater infrastructure, native plants  |  |
| <b>Programs</b>  |  |  |
| Programming (desired)                                      | None   |  |
| Programming (optional)                                     | Buskers, food vendors (carts), small concerts, special events  |  |
| Geographic range of users                                  | Immediate business community, downtown visitors and residents, tourists  |  |

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| <b>4.4</b>   | <b>NEIGHBORHOOD PARK</b>   | Neighborhood parks are larger than pocket parks and serve the surrounding neighborhood for multiple uses. Typical park development may include play areas, small fields, benches, picnic tables, and improved paths. |  |
| <b>Physical</b>  |  |  |  |
| Size   | Between 0.25 and 9 acres   |  |  |
| Setting  | Single Family Residential, Residential Urban Villages, Hub Urban Villages<br>Generally surrounded by residences, small businesses, small or arterial streets |  |  |
| Contributes to planning area Usable Open Space requirement | Yes  |  |  |
| <b>Built environment</b>                                   |  |  |  |
| Percent developed  | 30-100%  |  |  |
| Assets (desired)   | Benches<br>Designed landscape<br>Improved paths  | Level grassy area for informal activity<br>Picnic tables<br>Play area  |  |
| Assets (optional)  | Basketball court<br>Boat launch<br>Comfort station<br>Garden<br>Lighting for safety<br>Picnic shelter or small shelter house                                 | Public art<br>Sports fields (up to one)<br>Stage<br>Tennis courts<br>Wading pool<br>Viewpoint<br>Off-leash Area  |  |
| Parking  | Generally just street parking; may have off-street parking   |  |  |
| <b>Natural Environment</b>                                 |  |  |  |
| Natural Area   | May have natural area, creek, lake   |  |  |
| Environmental Benefits                                     | Green stormwater infrastructure, native plants, habitat (if natural area), CO2 reduction   |  |  |
| <b>Programs</b>  |  |  |  |
| Programming (desired)                                      | None   |  |  |
| Programming (optional)                                     | Light scheduling for athletic teams, community gatherings, small concerts  |  |  |
| Geographic range of users                                  | Surrounding neighborhood – between ¼ and ½ mile  |  |  |

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| <b>4.5</b>   | <b>COMMUNITY PARK</b>  | A community park meets the recreational needs of several neighborhoods and may also preserve unique landscapes and open spaces. These parks serve multiple uses and provide recreational facilities and accommodate group activities not provided in neighborhood parks. Community park sites should be accessible by arterial and/or collector streets. |  |
| <b>Physical</b>  |  |  |  |
| Size   | Between 5 and 60 acres   |  |  |
| Setting  | Single Family Residential, Residential Urban Villages, Hub Urban Villages<br>Should be next to an arterial, institution, or natural area rather than surrounded by homes on all sides      |  |  |
| Contributes to planning area Usable Open Space requirement | Yes  |  |  |
| <b>Built environment</b>                                   |  |  |  |
| Percent developed  | 25-100%  |  |  |
| Assets (desired)   | Basketball court<br>Benches<br>Comfort station<br>Designed landscape<br>Improved paths<br>Level grassy area for informal activity  | Lighting for safety<br>Picnic tables and shelters<br>Play area<br>Sports field(s)  |  |
| Assets (optional)  | Boat launch<br>Community Center<br>Concessions<br>Community or specialty garden<br>Lifeguarded beach<br>Lighting for specific facility use<br>Natural Area<br>Off-leash area<br>Public art | Pool<br>Recreation complex (lighted sports fields with designated parking away from residences)<br>Skatepark<br>Stage<br>Tennis courts<br>Wading pool<br>Viewpoint   |  |
| Parking  | Off-street parking   |  |  |
| <b>Natural Environment</b>                                 |  |  |  |
| Natural Area   | May have natural area, creek, lake   |  |  |
| Environmental Benefits                                     | Green stormwater infrastructure, native plants, habitat (if natural area), CO2 reduction   |  |  |
| <b>Programs</b>  |  |  |  |
| Programming (desired)                                      | Community gatherings   |  |  |
| Programming (optional)                                     | Scheduled for athletic teams, small concerts, naturalist activities, food vendors (cart)   |  |  |
| Geographic range of users                                  | Several surrounding neighborhoods – between 1/2 and 3 miles; citywide if park contains a recreation complex  |  |  |

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| <b>4.6 RECREATION AREA</b>                                 | Recreation areas supplement neighborhood and community parks, serving broader citywide recreation needs. Each of these parks contains various assets, often for active recreation, and is programmed accordingly. Many also have designated natural areas. Restroom facilities and off-street parking are generally provided for users. |  |
| <b>Physical</b>  |   |  |
| Size   | Between 20 and 500 acres  |  |
| Setting  | Single Family Residential, Residential Urban Villages<br>Accessible via public transit and urban trail system and arterial streets<br>Usually next to an arterial, commercial building, other institution, greenspace, or waterfront, rather than surrounded by residences on all sides   |  |
| Contributes to planning area Usable Open Space requirement | Yes   |  |
| <b>Built environment</b>                                   |   |  |
| Percent developed  | 20-100%   |  |
| Assets (desired)   | Benches<br>Comfort station<br>Designed landscape<br>Improved paths<br>Level grassy area for informal activity   | Lighting for safety<br>Picnic tables and shelters<br>Play area<br>Stage  |
| Assets (optional)  | Administration Building<br>Basketball court<br>Boat launch<br>Community Center<br>Concessions<br>Lifeguarded beach<br>Lighting for specific facility use<br>Off-leash area<br>Natural area<br>Pool  | Recreation complex (lighted sports fields with designated parking away from residences)<br>Sports field(s)<br>Skatepark<br>Tennis court<br>Unique garden areas or conservatory<br>Wading pool<br>Viewpoint |
| Parking  | Multiple off-street parking lots to allow for access to different parts of the park   |  |
| <b>Natural Environment</b>                                 |   |  |
| Natural Area   | Yes – forest, lake, creek, riparian area  |  |
| Environmental Benefits                                     | Green stormwater infrastructure, native plants, habitat, riparian corridor (possible), CO2 reduction  |  |
| <b>Programs</b>  |   |  |
| Programming (desired)                                      | Community gatherings  |  |
| Programming (optional)                                     | Scheduled for athletic teams, concerts, special sporting events, large special events, nature programs, fairs   |  |
| Geographic range of users                                  | Citywide, regional, tourists  |  |

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| <b>4.7</b>   | <b>NATURAL AREA/<br/>GREENBELT</b>  | Natural Areas are park sites established for the protection and stewardship of wildlife, habitat and other natural systems support functions. Some natural areas are accessible for low-impact use. Minimal infrastructure may include access and signage, where it will not adversely impact habitat or natural systems functions. Larger natural areas may have small sections developed to serve a community park function. Large Natural Area/Greenbelts may be divided into subareas based on vegetation, habitat, restoration status, wildlife area designation, recreation use area, etc. in order to better differentiate resource needs and use priorities. |
| <b>Physical</b>  |   |  |
| Size   | Any   |  |
| Setting  | Where tracts of undeveloped land are available. Natural areas may include, but are not limited to, forest, meadows, riparian areas, beaches, tidelands and wetlands. Non-accessible natural areas are generally found on steep slopes or in riparian zones or wetlands. Natural areas often serve as a buffer between incompatible land uses. See 1993 Greenspaces Policy (Resolution 28653) for details about natural areas. |  |
| Contributes to planning area Usable Open Space requirement | Only parks with usable open space over 10,000 square feet   |  |
| <b>Built environment</b>                                   |   |  |
| Percent developed  | Limited to infrastructure for support services  |  |
| Assets (desired)   | None (Parks Design Standard 02900-01 "Site Restoration of Natural Areas" shall apply)   |  |
| Assets (optional)  | Comfort station (in more heavily used natural areas such as Carkeek and Discovery Park)<br>Environmental Learning Center<br>Picnic tables   | Play area<br>Signage<br>Trails (internal and connecting with external urban trails)<br>Viewpoint   |
| Parking  | Street parking, off-street parking for natural areas with more amenities  |  |
| <b>Natural Environment</b>                                 |   |  |
| Natural Area   | Yes   |  |
| Environmental Benefits                                     | Green stormwater infrastructure, native plants, habitat, riparian corridor (if there is a creek or shoreline), erosion control  |  |
| <b>Programs</b>  |   |  |
| Programming (desired)                                      | Environmental education   |  |
| Programming (optional)                                     | Plant restoration service projects, research  |  |
| Geographic range of users                                  | Citywide, regional, tourists  |  |

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| <b>4.8 BOULEVARDS/GREEN STREETS/TRAILS</b>                 | Boulevards, green streets and trails are linear parks that typically serve as an aesthetically-pleasing transportation corridor. A boulevard is legally designated in SMC 15.02.046, defined as an extension or expansion of a dedicated street which continues to serve as a right-of-way in addition to being park land. Many of Seattle’s boulevards are part of the Olmsted plan. Boulevards and green streets often provide safe pedestrian routes as well as recreation opportunities. |  |
| <b>Physical</b>  |  |  |
| Size   | Any  |  |
| Setting  | Single Family Residential, Residential Urban Villages, Hub Urban Villages<br>Along an arterial road<br>In places with attractive views   |  |
| Contributes to planning area Usable Open Space requirement | Those with usable open space over 10,000 square feet   |  |
| <b>Built environment</b>                                   |  |  |
| Percent developed  | 25-100%  |  |
| Assets (desired)   | Designed landscape Improved Path   | Regular street lighting                          |
| Assets (optional)  | Benches<br>Decorative lighting<br>Flat grassy area for informal activity   | Play area<br>Public gathering place<br>Viewpoint |
| Parking  | Street parking, off-street parking   |  |
| <b>Natural Environment</b>                                 |  |  |
| Natural Area   | May have shoreline, riparian area  |  |
| Environmental Benefits                                     | Green stormwater infrastructure, native plants, riparian area, CO2 reduction   |  |
| <b>Programs</b>  |  |  |
| Programming (desired)                                      | None   |  |
| Programming (optional)                                     | None   |  |
| Geographic range of users                                  | Citywide, all travelers using the street   |  |

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| <b>4.9</b> | <b>SPECIAL-USE PARKS</b> | <p>This category refers to stand-alone parks that are designed to serve one particular use. Examples of parks that fit into this category include stand-alone golf courses, marinas, boat ramps, and community or specialty gardens. These parks may serve a second or third use (e.g. picnic tables at a marina or walking paths at a golf course), but the primary use is prioritized with regard to design, maintenance and funding decisions.</p> <p>For each special-use park type, the descriptors will differ depending on industry standards and best practices for the intended activity. For each type of special-use park, a more detailed list of descriptors should be developed by a design expert in that particular field.</p> |
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| <b>Physical</b>  |   |
| Size   | Whatever size is necessary for the intended use   |
| Setting  | Depends on intended use   |
| Contributes to planning area Usable Open Space requirement | In some cases   |
| <b>Built environment</b>                                   |   |
| Percent developed  | 70-100%   |
| Assets (desired)   | Depends on intended use   |
| Assets (optional)  | Depends on intended use   |
| Parking  | Depends on intended use   |
| <b>Natural Environment</b>                                 |   |
| Natural Area   | None  |
| Environmental benefits                                     | golf courses contribute to CO2 reduction, native plants, habitat, and green stormwater infrastructure; environmental benefits of other special-use parks depends on development |
| <b>Programs</b>  |   |
| Programming (desired)                                      | Depends on intended use   |
| Programming (optional)                                     | Depends on intended use   |
| Geographic range of users                                  | Citywide  |

5.0 RESPONSIBILITY

- 5.1 The Planning & Development Division (PDD) will be responsible for reviewing the Parks Classification System as a guideline as park development plans are reviewed for proposed improvements or changes in use.
- 5.2 The Parks Division will be responsible for reviewing the Parks Classification System as new maintenance procedures at a park site are considered.
- 5.3 As policies related to park programming options in different park types are considered, it will be the responsibility of the Recreation Division to review the Parks Classification System for policy guidance.

6.0 PROCEDURE

- 6.1 Revisions to the Parks Classification System may be requested, including revisions to park category definitions and changes to the assigned category of a specific park. Requests should be made in writing to the Parks Superintendent.

The Parks Superintendent may confer with the chair of the Board of Park Commissioners on the revisions and the preferred public review process for requested revisions. The Parks Superintendent shall have final authority on changes to the policy and/or park classification assignments.

7.0 REFERENCES Not applicable