



2020-2032 STRATEGIC PLAN

In March 2020, after extensive public input, Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) released a long-range **Strategic Plan** to guide programming, services, and investments from 2020 to 2032. Guided by a new Pathway to Equity, a roadmap for SPR to play our part in ending institutional and structural racism in Seattle, the plan identified 40 strategies to advance SPR's mission to provide welcoming and safe opportunities to play, learn, contemplate, build community, and promote responsible stewardship of the land. The plan and strategies are organized around four pillars:

- **HEALTHY PEOPLE**
- **HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT**
- **STRONG COMMUNITIES**
- **ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE**

RECOVERY FOCUS

SPR paused implementation of the 2020-2032 Strategic Plan when we pivoted to emergency pandemic response in early 2020. In 2021, SPR sought to reengage with communities we serve about how their needs have shifted to help shape our short-term budget priorities and operations. Our action planning work focused on SPR's role in addressing four parallel crises that have caused major disruption in our city and to our services:



PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELL BEING

Protecting staff and communities facing public health crises by addressing physical and emotional isolation, exacerbated by limited access to recreational activities, which disproportionately threaten the health of people in marginalized communities.



RACIAL EQUITY

Challenging and working to change institutional barriers that perpetuate harm, including those in which our own institution has participated, to better center equity in decision-making and service delivery.



ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Responsibly stewarding limited public resources and investing in economic opportunity for communities we serve.



IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Doing our part to address the global environmental crisis by reducing our carbon footprint, increasing awareness, shifting our operations and business practices, and helping the most vulnerable communities we serve adapt to more extreme conditions.

ACTION PLANNING

To support response to these crises and make progress toward our overarching departmental goals, SPR recognized a need to focus on some concrete short-term steps. This three-year Action Plan identifies areas of focus and specific implementation steps that advance many of the long-range strategic priorities outlined in the Strategic Plan. This helps direct SPR's staff workplans in the near term and holds us accountable to communities we serve by publicly committing to a set of discrete activities. SPR plans to revisit and update the annual benchmarks in this Action Plan each year, and report on accomplishments as part of our annual reporting process. Future Action Plan iterations (2025-2027) will address additional Strategic Plan strategies. In concert with these commitments, teams will continue a wide range of day-to-day activities that steward a rich parks and recreation system.

ENGAGING WITH COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

From August to November 2021, SPR conducted a range of engagement activities to reconnect with communities we serve, with a focus on reaching Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). We held listening sessions, hosted an online open house, conducted thousands of in person and online surveys, met with partner institutions and City Boards and Commissions, and fielded emails. A comprehensive summary of this engagement work and results is included in the appendix to the Action Plan, and relevant themes are highlighted in each section below.

THIS 3 YEAR
ACTION PLAN
IDENTIFIES
AREAS OF FOCUS
AND SPECIFIC
IMPLEMENTATION
STEPS THAT
ADVANCE MANY
OF THE LONG-
RANGE STRATEGIC
PRIORITIES
OUTLINED IN THE
STRATEGIC PLAN.



HEALTHY PEOPLE

WHAT DID WE HEAR?

THEMES FROM 2021 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Change community center operating hours to better align with community needs.
- Continue to increase access to welcoming and relevant recreation opportunities for BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and people with disabilities.
- Increase awareness of program offerings at SPR recreation facilities.
- Enhance and maintain the system we already have, with a focus on enhancements in historically underserved areas.
- Partner with program staff to improve and enhance marketing practices.
- Increase access to food and urban agriculture opportunities.

HOW WILL WE RESPOND?

2022-24 ACTIONS

- ACTION 1:** Partner with community to identify responsive, equity-centered recreation programs resulting in a comprehensive recreation program plan.
- ACTION 2:** Expand community access to athletic fields while reevaluating athletic field scheduling practices through an equity lens.
- ACTION 3:** Steward all SPR facilities through a life cycle-based approach, prioritizing service in the most historically disadvantaged areas.
- ACTION 4:** Increase community awareness of SPR programs and services through video, web, and printed content.
- ACTION 5:** Shift community center operating hours to address community need for evening and weekend hours.
- ACTION 6:** Harvest and distribute food grown on SPR land in partnership with organizations that build the capacity of BIPOC communities to engage in food systems programming.

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

WHAT DID WE HEAR?

THEMES FROM 2021 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Increase access to environmental education opportunities. Prioritize offerings relevant to persons with disabilities and BIPOC community members.
- Identify opportunities to connect Green Seattle Partnership work to environmental education programming.
- Enhance career pathways through additional internships and job training opportunities.
- Decrease SPR's impact on climate change by using electric equipment, environmentally sound land management practices, and composting/recycling.
- Make strategic investments to balance climate adaptation and mitigation.
- Prioritize actions that leverage Seattle's tree canopy in mitigating the impacts of climate change.
- Partner with other institutions to create long-range plans for urban canopy restoration.
- Maximize usability and flexibility of existing park spaces through trail and pathway upgrades and enhancements.

HOW WILL WE RESPOND?

2022-24 ACTIONS

- ACTION 7:** Adopt landscape management practices that increase carbon sequestration, improve soil fertility, and increase water retention.
- ACTION 8:** Improve waste diversion in high-use and historically underserved parks.
- ACTION 9:** Pursue electrification, cooling, and renewable energy projects at SPR buildings, prioritizing facilities in equity zones.
- ACTION 10:** Increase tree canopy, focusing in historically underserved areas disproportionately impacted by summer heat, by piloting a tree grove planting program.
- ACTION 11:** Develop community-driven forest stewardship opportunities for BIPOC youth through paid job training experiences focused on ecological repair, relationship with the land, climate change adaptation, and human well-being.
- ACTION 12:** Improve access to trails in underserved communities through enhanced maintenance and condition assessments to improve safety, access, and park aesthetics.
- ACTION 13:** Increase outdoor learning experiences for youth in SPR after-school, summer, and teen programs to build an appreciation of the natural world and encourage stewardship.

STRONG COMMUNITIES

WHAT DID WE HEAR?

THEMES FROM 2021 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Establish meaningful and ongoing relationships with BIPOC community members by clarifying decision-making processes and increasing community engagement.
- Improve pathways for BIPOC community members to meaningfully participate in co-design and prioritization of capital project development and delivery.
- Improve safety and security at parks and facilities. Address the impacts of homelessness in parks.
- Improve park cleanliness and maintenance with an emphasis on increasing access to clean comfort stations.
- Reduce barriers to partnering with SPR (volunteer activities, small business permitting/contracting).
- Address issues with park safety and accessibility through Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, ADA improvements, signage, and SPR staff presence that reflect the community.
- Increase enforcement of leash and scoop laws, especially in smaller parks in dense and historically underserved areas with few other outdoor options.

HOW WILL WE RESPOND?

2022-24 ACTIONS

- ACTION 14:** Expand grants supporting community-led programming, expand technical tools, and streamline business practices.
- ACTION 15:** Provide a clear and equitable pathway for community-initiated projects by implementing a new equity fund.
- ACTION 16:** Respond to community requests to address safety concerns in parks and recreation facilities by developing and implementing a park safety strategy focused on positive uses, early intervention, and de-escalation.
- ACTION 17:** Respond to impacts of homelessness in parks by restoring outdoor spaces, partnering with service providers to maximize accessibility of park land and rights-of-way, and expanding the Seattle Conservation Corps.
- ACTION 18:** Support young people in Seattle by coordinating and expanding programs connecting youth and young adults to quality mentoring, job training, and employment opportunities.
- ACTION 19:** Respond to community demand for increased access to safe and welcoming public restrooms by enhancing maintenance, investing in infrastructure improvements for safety, and expanding year-round access.

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

WHAT DID WE HEAR?

THEMES FROM 2021 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Focus staff recruitment on BIPOC, including a focus on hiring from within communities being served.
- Improve connections to/collaboration with other City agencies with the goal of creating a more seamless experience for users.
- Enhance career pathways through additional internships and job training opportunities.
- Center equity in budgeting practices by meaningfully and visibly reprioritizing resources to serve BIPOC community.

HOW WILL WE RESPOND?

2022-24 ACTIONS

- ACTION 20:** Align SPR's policies and policy management process with our equity values and industry standards.
- ACTION 21:** Recruit and retain a workforce representative of the community we serve within and across racial categories, gender identities, and languages spoken.
- ACTION 22:** Enhance SPR's focus on restoration, activation, safety, and equitable service provision through 2023-2028 Seattle Park District funding.
- ACTION 23:** Publish a financial and performance management dashboard to increase transparency and accountability across SPR's lines of business.
- ACTION 24:** Continue collaboratively approaching strategic Citywide priorities with partner agencies to better meet community needs and extend SPR resources.