

# Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners  
Meeting Minutes  
September 22, 2011

Web site: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>  
(Includes agendas and minutes from 2001-present)

Also, view Seattle Channel tapes of meetings, June 12, 2008-most current, at  
<http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/watchVideos.asp?program=Parks>

## ***Board of Park Commissioners***

Present:

Antoinette Angulo  
John Barber  
Terry Holme, Chair  
Jourdan Keith  
Diana Kincaid, Vice-chair  
Donna Kostka  
Jackie Ramels

## ***Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff***

Eric Friedli, Acting Deputy Superintendent  
Sandy Brooks, Park Board Coordinator

This meeting was held at Seattle Park Headquarters, 100 Dexter Avenue North. Prior to the meeting, King County staff provided commissioners a tour of the West Point Treatment Center; Parks led a tour of Smith Cove Park and other park property in the Magnolia area.

Commissioner Holme called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and reviewed the meeting agenda.

**Commissioner Kincaid moved approval of the September 22 agenda and the record of correspondence. Commissioner Barber seconded. The vote was taken and the motion carried.**

## **Superintendent's Report**

Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli reported on the following topics in both a verbal and written report available to the Board and audience. To listen to the report, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5971> and move cursor to position 2.20.

### Mayors Budget Timeline:

*Monday, September 12*, Mayor McGinn and Councilmember Bagshaw announced proposed operational changes to the City's 26 community centers.

*Wednesday, September 21*, Mayor McGinn held a press conference at Magnuson Community Center on reinvesting the City's assets, including:

(1) Commits \$5.5 million in bond financing to renovate the west wing and hangar of Magnuson Park's Building 30 to bring the facility up to code and allow for expanded facility rental opportunities. The revenue generated after the improvements are made will cover 60 percent of the \$641,000 annual debt service payments on the bonds, starting in 2013. The General Fund will cover the remaining 40 percent, or approximately \$260,000, depending on how actual Building 30 revenues perform. The interest-only debt service payment in 2012 is estimated at \$212,000, and will be covered by the General Fund.

(2) \$1.9 million for new roofs at six city-owned facilities in 2012, including Central Area Motivation Program; Central Area Senior Center; Northwest Senior Center in Ballard; Southeast Health Clinic; South Park Community Service Center; and Teen Mother Center.

(3) Savings from the 2008 Parks Levy, resulting from an advantageous bidding climate for \$9.8 million for 17 Parks asset preservation projects for 2012, including

- o Ballard Community Center Roof Replacement
- o Beacon Hill Playground Comfort Station Renovation
- o Comfort Station Renovations- 2008 Parks Levy (sites to be determined)
- o Evers Pool Roof Repairs
- o Fairmount Park Playground Comfort Station Renovation
- o Fairmount Park Playground Fence Replacement
- o Garfield Community Center Roof Replacement
- o Green Lake Bathhouse Roof Replacement
- o Lower Woodland Playfield Tennis Court Lights Replacement
- o Loyal Heights Boiler and Electrical System Replacement
- o Madrona Playground Shelterhouse Restrooms Renovation
- o Matthews Beach Park Bathhouse Renovation
- o Queen Anne Pool Plaster Liner Replacement
- o Rainier Beach Playfield Play Area Renovation
- o Rainier Beach Playfield Tennis Courts and Lighting Replacement
- o Seward Park Water System Replacement and
- o Van Asselt Community Center Gym Roof Replacement

(4) Proceeds from the sale of the Rubble Yard property to the Washington State Department of Transportation in mid-2011 - \$3 million of the \$19.8 total proceeds are being spent in 2011 to support critical surface street repair needs. The mayor's 2012 Proposed Budget recommends using an additional \$6.7 million in Rubble Yard proceeds in 2012.

*Monday, September 26:* At South Seattle Community College, the mayor will announce his proposed 2012 budget. Parks has scheduled four geographic-area meetings with its staff for that morning. The impacts will not be as severe as last year; however, there will be cuts to staff.

Commissioner Kincaid stated the information shared at the Magnuson Park press conference is exciting and has been well received by the community.

Magnuson Park Update: Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli reported on two of the buildings:

*Building 11:* The developer is moving forward with the terms of the original lease and has completed attractive work on the outside of the building near Sail Sand Point. He invited commissioners and the public to visit the site. Meanwhile, City staff are dealing with the \$4 million lawsuit filed by the developer, following the failed request for a lease amendment. Commissioner Ramels referred to a recent Seattle Times article and stated it was woefully uninformed.

*Building 30* – Parks staff are now looking at how best to phase the construction work (referred to in Mayor McGinn's September 21 press conference) in order to get as much occupancy as possible. Discussions with Department of Planning and Development (DPD) and the public will continue in October.

Commissioner Barber asked whether DPD will allow Parks to renovate a part of the building and occupy it. Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli responded this determination, as well as the phasing of the project, will be determined during discussions with DPD. Responding to a question from Commissioner Holme whether the work will be performed by Parks staff, Acting Superintendent Friedli answered that staff are working with an architectural and engineering firm. They are reviewing past reports, doing cost estimates, and helping with the design. Commissioner Holme asked if it is Parks' intent to keep Building 30's purpose as it was previously. Acting Deputy Superintendent Williams answered that it is. The west wing has been vacant and plans call for artists to be housed there.

*Magnuson Park Circulation Plan:* Parks staff will meet with Magnuson Park Advisory Council on September 28 to discuss elements that should be included in the plan.

Aquarium Plans for Pier 60 Capital Campaign: On September 20, the Seattle Aquarium's Board of Directors affirmed its support to proceed on a Harbor Seal exhibit and animal movement capital project in connection with the City of Seattle's capital investment for Pier 60 corrosion repair and wood finger pier replacement. The project objective is to meet certain Association of Zoos and Aquariums animal husbandry standards, convert a holding pool into a new Harbor Seal exhibit to allow the Aquarium to teach visitors about the most prolific Puget Sound marine mammal, and to launch a collaborative Harbor Seal breeding program with other accredited institutions. To accomplish this, the Harbor Seal project will include increasing the water volume in the Harbor Seal exhibit, adding seating for 100 guests around the exhibit, making improvements for mammal animal movement, and adding new interpretive elements focused on connecting visitors to Puget Sound. The goal will be to raise approximately \$2.5 million for the capital improvements as well as an endowment fundraising effort. The new project is anticipated to open to the public in the summer of 2013.

Car Accident Damages FloWare Park: Recently a car damaged FloWare park. There was minor turf damage that can be easily repaired, but more significant damage to the Art Structure created by Coyote Central. Parks staff are working with Claudia Stelle, Executive Director at Coyote Central, to figure out the best approach to repairing the artwork. The damage looks minimal but the construction technique is very specialized in terms of materials and shapes. Parks will continue working with Coyote Central to identify a strategy for repairing the artwork and are coordinating with Seattle Police to be reimbursed for necessary repairs.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Barber on who will pay for the repairs, Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli stated that the driver's auto insurance will pay.

Atlantic City Nursery/Rainier Beach Urban Farm & Wetlands Update: Parks and the Friends of Atlantic City Nursery are beginning the Neighborhood Matching Fund (NMF) Large Fund project and the public planning process for the renovation of the nursery space into an urban farm and restoring the existing wetlands. The consultant selection process will begin this month to select a team of architects, engineers, wetland biologists, and urban agricultural specialists. Public meetings will begin in 2012. The NMF Large Fund allocates \$50,000 for planning, design, permitting, and construction drawings. Construction will be funded through the 2008 Parks and Green Spaces Levy's Opportunity Fund, which allocates \$500,000, and is slated to begin in 2013.

A groundbreaking event is scheduled on Saturday, October 1, 10am to 3pm, at the Nursery site. Festivities include farm and wetlands walking tours, live music from local bands, delicious food to cook and eat, opportunities to meet staff from neighborhood farms, special guests, and more!

Jose Rizal OLA Update: A public meeting is scheduled for October 20 at Jefferson Community Center from 6:30-8:00 pm where a draft design for the dog park/off-leash area (OLA) will be presented and discussed with the community. The trail is progressing and Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli encouraged commissioners to stop by and see the progress and changes. Previously the off-leash area was located on a steep slope. Now it will be in the center of the park and enjoy stunning views of downtown Seattle.

Tilikum Place/The 5 Point Café Outdoor Seating Area Update: Last fall, the Park Board heard citizen testimony voicing concerns with proposed changes to Tilikum Place by the 5 Point Café. Following meetings with the public and Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), the requested size of the outdoor seating was changed and several other changes made. The 5 Point Café has built its outside seating, planters and benches in the park have been relocated to accommodate a revised pedestrian pathway, metal "bridges" have been installed to allow pedestrians and, more particularly, wheelchairs to easily cross the rain gutter between the park and the old sidewalk, and picnic table furniture has been added to park to support positive use. Over the summer, musicians in the Center City Busker Program were scheduled in the park during lunchtime. Neither Parks nor SDOT have received further complaints from those opposed to the physical changes requested by Dave Meinert, owner of the 5 Point. He reports significantly increased positive use of the park as a result of the added furniture and buskers and has asked for the installation of an additional picnic table. The request is under consideration, as the tables are expensive.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Ramels whether the Department has contacted the nearby restaurant owner who testified to the Park Board on several occasions against this change, Acting Superintendent Friedli responded that Parks staff haven't; however, the other owner he hasn't voiced any additional complaints.

Freeway Park Annual Meeting: The Jim Ellis Freeway Park Association annual meeting was a combination of two things: 1) a public celebration of a Neighborhood Matching Fund project to create a guided tour of the park using a newly-designed brochure and a docent program (the brochures are completed and the docent program is in development), and 2) the launch of a renewed membership drive effort.

The event took place in the park and included a live band, a raffle, and free ice cream. Over 250 people attended, as well as Parks and Department of Neighborhood staff. Plans are for this to become an annual event.

Delridge Skatepark Grand Opening: Commissioner Ramels attended this event and voiced high praise for the new facility.

## **Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience**

The Chair explained this portion of the agenda is reserved for topics that have not had, or are not scheduled for, a public hearing. Speakers are limited to two-to-three minutes each, will be timed, and are asked to stand at the podium to speak. The Board's usual process is for 10 minutes of testimony to be heard at this time, with additional testimony heard after the regular agenda and just before Old/New Business. No one signed up to testify.

### **Briefing: Bell Street Park**

Patrick Donohue, Seattle Parks Project Planner, presented a briefing on the future Bell Street Park. Prior to the meeting, Commissioners received a written briefing paper, which was posted to the Board's web page and provided to the public at tonight's meeting. To hear Mr. Donohue's presentation and the Board's discussion, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5971> and move cursor to position 21.30.

### *Written Briefing*

### **Requested Board Action**

Staff will provide a briefing on the status of the Bell Street Park Project. No formal Board action is requested at this time.

### **Project Description and Background**

#### ○ Genesis of the Project

##### ○ Situation

The neighborhood of Belltown holds a unique spot within the City on many levels. Geographically it links other neighborhoods: the waterfront, Pike Place Market, downtown, Seattle Center, and the Denny Triangle. It has an eclectic mix of businesses, residences, and architecture. It is a dedicated, caring, and inclusive community that not only supports, but also embraces more than 30 human services agencies and low-income housing facilities located there. Belltown has the highest density of residents in the City of Seattle. From 1990 to 2005 the number of housing units increased by more than 246% and is expected to continue to increase for the foreseeable future.

##### ○ Challenge

Per the City's goals for open space, the neighborhood should have 8.64 acres of open space now, and 13.34 by 2024. Unfortunately, the land and resources dedicated to open space has not kept pace with the growth in both residential and business use. Belltown has one park (Regrade Park) that is about one-half acre, clearly falling short of providing for basic needs, let alone establishing

the livable, pedestrian-oriented, and active mixed-use neighborhood visualized in the neighborhood plan and by the City.

Long term aggressive planning for additional open space in the form of parks and green relief is needed. However, there is an immediate need to provide pedestrian amenities that a great neighborhood like Belltown deserves.

o Solution: *Complete Green Street Improvements for Bell Street from First to Fifth Avenues*

The City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan calls for "green streets" to meet open space needs in built-out neighborhoods. Bell Street was designated as a green street in the 1985 Downtown Plan. Consistent with the 1998 Belltown Neighborhood Plan, past work and studies, current interests, and the funding environment, the community endorses a strategy that focuses in the immediate future on green streets. The groundwork for Bell Street Park was laid initially with "Growing Vine Street" and lately with the studies done specifically for Bell Street and the streetscape work on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue.

The conceptual design was approved by the Parks and Green Spaces Levy Oversight Committee in April of 2009 for \$2.5 million in funding based on the ability to provide 17,000 square feet of much-needed open space for the Belltown Community. The conceptual design was subsequently presented to the City Council in June of 2009. The Council approved both the funding authority and transfer of jurisdiction of the Bell Street right-of-way from the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) to Parks so that the plan could be implemented as envisioned. An additional \$1.0 Million of funding was recommended for the project by the Parks and Green Spaces Levy Oversight Committee in October of 2010.

### **Public Involvement Process**

Three public meetings were held to present the Bell Street Park Project to the citizens of Seattle (November 10, 2009, January 13, 2010, and May 19, 2010). All three meetings were well attended and provided useful information for the Design Team. The intent of all meetings was for the community to give their input on three key design themes of Vibrant, Safety, and Green proposed for this project. Attendees could give input at the public meetings or send comments by mail or email.

- o Key priorities from the community include:
  - Safety
  - Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)
  - Street lighting
  - Curbless woonerf\*-like park
  - Slow vehicle speeds to allow for pedestrians and bikes to be on equal footing
  - Provide festival space
  - Provide space for street vendors
  - Outdoor café seating

### **Citizen Concerns/Opposition**

Overall the public meetings were very positive; some people expressed concerns over the street safety in the neighborhood and spending such a large sum of money on a new park. Additionally, the loss of on-street parking was a concern for some.

Outreach for these meetings followed Parks' Public Involvement Policy. Also, at the community's request, Parks staff attended 'The Best of Belltown' event in early June 2011 and gave an update on the project's status in lieu of an additional public meeting. In addition, Parks staff will continue to provide project status updates to the stakeholders as needed.

*\* Woonerf is the Dutch name for a "living street" in which the needs of car drivers are secondary to the needs of users of the street as a whole. It is a "shared space" designed to be used by pedestrians, playing children, bicyclists, and low-speed motor vehicles, becoming a public place for people instead of single-purpose conduits for automobiles. ([www.greeninfrastructurewiki.com/page/Woonerf](http://www.greeninfrastructurewiki.com/page/Woonerf))*

Stakeholders associated with the project include:

- Belltown Community Council
- Belltown Business Association
- Dorothy Day House & Bakhita House: Catholic Community Services
- Housing Resources Group
- Seattle Housing Authority
- Seattle Police Department: West Precinct
- Low Income Housing Institute
- Plymouth Housing Group
- Department of Neighborhoods
- Department of Transportation
- Department of Planning and Development

### **Design Intent**

- Key Issues:
  1. CPTED: provide innovative landscape and park amenities to provide for adequate visibility and lighting.
  2. Sustainability: To the greatest extent possible, reflect principles of environmental responsibility in the design and construction:
    - a. Purchase materials with recycled content
    - b. Meet or exceed water and/or energy conservation standards
    - c. Incorporate design measures to reduce maintenance and pesticide use
- Proposed Project Elements:
  1. Reconfigure the 66-foot Bell Street right-of-way to provide a 17 foot vehicle travel lane incorporated into a pedestrian and bike friendly woonerf
  2. Insure the woonerf is configured to meet the needs of a shared road as defined in the Bike Master Plan
  3. The reconfiguration will provide a 26 feet +/- wide pedestrian promenade along the north side of vehicle travel lane with 17,000 plus square feet of public open space
  4. Provide green stormwater infrastructure to include storm water planters
  5. Provide a comprehensive lighting plan which increases the lighting level throughout the Bell Street corridor for pedestrian safety
  6. Provide an inventive landscape plan that will revitalize the Bell Street corridor while meeting all the needs of CPTED
  7. Provide a level of finishes which are as sustainable as possible yet provides a superior level of durability, ease of maintenance, and beauty
  8. Provide both fixed and flexible park furnishings
  9. Provide an interface between existing Regrade Park and the new Bell Street Boulevard Park

### **Budget**

The 2008 Parks and Green Space Levy Acquisition Fund provided \$3.5 million for this new park in the center of the Belltown neighborhood.

### **Schedule**

- September 2011 - Park Board Briefing on the project status
- SDOT Street Improvement Permit (SIP) review – in progress
- Advertise for bid upon approval of the SIP and completion of construction documents
- Notice to Proceed with construction late 2011 or early 2012
- Substantial completion June 2012

### **Additional Information**

- Project Web link:

[http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/bell\\_street/boulevard\\_park.htm](http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/bell_street/boulevard_park.htm)

- Patrick Donohue, Senior Project Coordinator, [patrick.donohue@seattle.gov](mailto:patrick.donohue@seattle.gov)

### *Discussion*

Mr. Donohue introduced himself, briefly reviewed information in the written briefing paper, and shared additional information with a Powerpoint presentation. The Powerpoint included a current map and historic photo of the area. It also included key design elements, including landscaping, curbing, lighting, and safety. The artist is Sheila Klein, with the art component funded by the 1% for Art program.

Commissioner Kincaid noted that Bell Street has little traffic and she is very supportive of closing it to traffic. She asked whether the trees on the south side of the street will block the sun. Mr. Donohue responded that the design team studied the buildings and layout and the trees will be moved to the north side of the street to take advantage of as much sun as possible.

Mr. Donohue explained that Seattle's busiest fire station is located very near the new park and uses Bell Street for its emergency responses and will continue to do so. The design team feels that some traffic in the park, when people aren't around, is more positive than no traffic.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Barber on the parking, Mr. Donohue explained that the affected area had 79 spaces and this will be reduced to 23. In general, the community and merchants are supportive of this change. Commissioner Keith asked for a definition of de-pave and Mr. Donohue responded that it means the asphalt will be torn out and replaced with greenery.

Commissioner Keith asked why established trees are being moved/replaced. Mr. Donohue answered that the existing trees are about halfway through their life, have limbs that are breaking off, and were planted too close to nearby buildings. It is better to replace them during the construction project than when their life is over. The design team has spent months discussing the trees and this was not a decision that was made lightly. Commissioner Kostka asked about the size of the replacement trees and Mr. Donohue responded they will be 6" caliper and 15-16' tall.

Commissioner Barber referred to the description of the curbs as "curbless" and noted that when Westlake Park was built, the designers wanted curbless there but were rejected. Will that happen with this project? Mr. Donohue stated the decision for "curbless" at Bell Street Park is almost finalized. Commissioner Holme asked how the streets are delineated if the park is curbless. Mr. Donohue answered that drivers may turn left off 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the rise will be 6", which is enough to help slow drivers down – which is the goal.

Commissioner Kincaid referred to long-range plans to connect the Seattle waterfront to Denny and South Lake Union parks, as described by James Corner at recent public meetings. She asked whether the slope at Bell Street Park is conducive for the connection. Mr. Donohue responded that the slope is very steep and gave more details.

Commissioner Holme asked about the street drains and Mr. Donohue stated significant engineering has gone into the drainage. Responding to a question from Commissioner Keith whether the plans include bioswales, he explained that large planters will collect and slow the water. Designers have to plan for future utilities and leave the underground clear to do so. Commissioner Keith remarked that mature trees collect and hold water and asked if the design team studied this. Mr. Donohue answered that there was extensive study on the trees. Plans are to remove 46 trees and plant 105. The construction schedule is for bids to be awarded in October-November 2011, with the park opening in 2012.

Commissioners thanked Mr. Donohue for the briefing. Commissioner Ramels added that it is the most exciting park project in a long time.



## **Briefing: Belltown Community Center**

Susanne Rockwell, Seattle Parks Project Planner, presented a briefing on the Belltown Community Center. Prior to this meeting, Commissioners received a written briefing, included in the minutes and posted to the Board's web page for the public. To hear the full presentation and the Board's discussion, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5971> and move cursor to position 49.0.

### *Written Briefing*

#### **Requested Board Action**

Staff will provide a briefing on the status of the Belltown Community Center project. No formal Board action is requested at this time.

#### **Project Description and Background**

Seattle Parks and Recreation (Parks) proposes to lease property to be developed into the new Belltown Community Center. The new community center will meet the need for a community gathering place in the Belltown neighborhood of Seattle. The proposed site is located at 2235 5<sup>th</sup> Ave, the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> Ave and Bell St (the former American Games (ZUM) Building). Parks proposes to enter an agreement with a provider for operation of the center.

The project is funded by the 1999 Community Center Levy and is the final Levy project to be implemented. The proposed project is the lease of an approximately 6,000 square foot community center space that will serve as a civic focal point for Belltown, with rooms available for public meetings, classes, and rentals. The Community Center will provide an anchor of activity at the east end of the Bell Street Park Project, helping to activate that new public space. The goal is to open the community center by March 2012 before the completion of the Bell Street Park project.

In 1999/2000 the Denny Hill Association applied for and received an early implementation grant for \$35,000 from the Department of Neighborhoods. This grant funded a neighborhood survey of program desires and development of an initial list of sites. The intent was to lease or purchase space, and to renovate that space if necessary, to accommodate community gatherings. The community hired a consultant to develop programming priorities, space requirements based on the programming priorities, siting options, and development cost estimates. The Denny Hill Association also conducted three public meetings in 2000. The public outreach also included a survey on programming options for the center; 265 people responded to the survey with their priorities.

In 2000 Parks worked with the Low Income Housing Institute's (LIHI) Belltown View site, attempting to locate the community center at the housing site. However, this effort was unsuccessful. Since then Parks conducted additional public meetings from 2001-2005 and has actively investigated many locations in the Belltown neighborhood for a multi-year lease arrangement to house a community center; however, spaces meeting criteria for a center have been virtually non-existent. The project was effectively put on hold.

In 2010, with changed economic conditions, Parks Acquisition staff restarted efforts to find a site for the community center. Parks staff investigated an additional 27 sites within the Belltown core for possible lease space to accommodate the community center.

Key priorities for location included the following:

- Proximity to Bell St. Park
- Affordable 10-year lease
- ADA accessibility
- Exclusive entrance
- Moderate tenant improvement costs.

The preferred site sits at the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. and Bell St. The current entrance faces 5<sup>th</sup> Ave., but will be relocated to face onto Bell St. This intersection is the eastern end of Parks' Bell St. project. The building is



currently available for lease, has one story plus a mezzanine (which will be removed as part of the tenant improvement package), and floor space occupies approximately 6,000 square feet.



*Looking southwest from the intersection of 5<sup>th</sup> Ave and Bell St.*

### **Public Involvement Process**

A Project Advisory Team (PAT) has been assembled to make recommendations on programming and assist in outreach for the community center project. The PAT's membership includes City liaisons, community members, and business owners from the neighborhood. The PAT and Parks staff have been meeting regularly; thus far, the PAT's involvement has included:

- Discussions on facility location
- Preliminary input on program priorities
- Public meeting content and structure
- Additional outreach.

More than 65 citizens attended the first public meeting for this project, hosted by the Belltown Community Council and Mary's Place. The intent of the first meeting was for the community to give input on five key discussion questions (listed below). Attendees could give input at the public meeting or send comments by mail or email.

#### **Public Meeting #1 Questions:**

1. What types of programs and services would you like to have at your community center?
2. What hours of operation are most important to you?
3. How should the community center be staffed?
4. What is your vision for the community center?
5. Other important things to consider?

During the meeting, after the community had a chance to brainstorm ideas, they had the opportunity to place 'dots' on their top three priority items (the dots were numbered and color-coded). Also there were boards with a variety of programming options, visual images, and written lists available for the 'dot' exercise.

Key priorities from the community on future programming and operations of the Community Center include:

- Seattle Police Department - 24 hour Police desk space
- Free town hall meetings
- Tai Chi, Yoga, Pilates, possible martial arts classes for all ages
- Adult programs and classes

- Evening dances/events
- Open 7 days/week all day
- Creation of a community board that works in tandem with the operator, regular operator evaluations by the City and community board, and an Operator who understands and is engaged with the neighborhood.

### **Citizen Concerns/Opposition**

Overall the first public meeting was very positive; some people expressed concerns over Parks' level of security and homeless people using the community center. Additional discussion on this issue at the meeting had other community members expressing the sentiment that it is up to the community to create positive activity.

Outreach for the first public meeting followed Parks' Public Involvement Policy, and PAT members provided more outreach. At the community's request, Parks staff attended 'The Best of Belltown' event in early June and gave an update on the project's status in lieu of a second public summer meeting. An open house may be held in the late-fall/winter before the center opens. In addition Parks staff is coordinating a meet-and-greet with the Belltown Community Council and the potential operating partners.

Stakeholders associated with the project include:

- Belltown Community Council
- Belltown Business Association
- Dorothy Day House: Catholic Community Services
- Housing Resources Group
- Real Change
- YWCA
- Seattle Housing Authority
- Seattle Police Department: West Precinct
- Low Income Housing Institute
- Plymouth Housing Group
- Associated Recreation Council
- Department of Neighborhoods
- Department of Planning and Development

### **Issues**

The proposed lease is scheduled for City Council action on November 17. The lease is for eight years and Parks staff are working with the landlord and project architects to refine the tenant improvement package to fit the project budget.

The second issue revolves around finalizing the partnership agreement. Parks is currently working with potential partners to operate the facility, making sure to incorporate the needs and desires of the community in those discussions. Parks will also incorporate a mechanism for community members to be involved in future operations and programming decisions related to the center.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

Parks has limited input on the specific details and material choices of tenant improvements to the facility, given that the building is privately owned and only leased by Parks. Probably the largest contributing environmental factor would be the reduction in gas emissions, with people walking to this facility, and/or not driving as far.

### **Budget**

The 1999 Community Center Levy provides \$2.02 million for a new community center for the Belltown neighborhood. The budget will provide funds for tenant improvement and lease payments for eight years.

## Schedule

- September 2011 - Park Board Briefing on the project status
- Lease and Tenant Improvement negotiations – in progress
- Lease legislation to Mayor and City Council – November 2011
- Operator negotiations – in progress
- Tenant Improvements – start fall 2011
- Open for Business – February/March 2012

## Additional Information

- Project Web link: [http://seattle.gov/parks/centers/current/Belltown\\_Neighborhood\\_Center.htm](http://seattle.gov/parks/centers/current/Belltown_Neighborhood_Center.htm)
- Susanne Rockwell, [susanne.rockwell@seattle.gov](mailto:susanne.rockwell@seattle.gov)

### *Verbal Briefing and Discussion*

Ms. Rockwell introduced herself and gave a brief overview of information in the written briefing paper and two pieces of information not in the paper: (1) the Department had aimed for a 10-year lease; however, with the delay in the project, there is enough funding for an eight-year lease; and (2) Parks is exploring a Memorandum of Agreement with the Associated Recreation Council and Y to operate the community facility.

There was an unexpected delay in getting the legislation before the City Council for consideration. It is currently scheduled for review at the November 17 Council meeting. This delay has pushed the opening of the facility back to early spring 2012, rather than in January. The project originally had \$1.89 million allotted and, with interest, that amount has grown to \$2.2 million.

Commissioner Holme asked if the programming and lease are tied together. Ms. Rockwell answered that the tenant improvements (which would be in the lease) must be completed before the operator can move in and begin programming. Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli added that the Department trusts the partnership will work; Parks has been clear that its staff will not operate the facility. ARC and the Y are in discussions and are committed to working together; however, they can't begin programming until the lease agreement is finalized and the tenant improvements are completed. Commissioner Ramels noted this type of community center is a novel idea.

Ms. Rockwell added that the community is working with ARC and the Y on working out details. For instance, spring flooring is required for quality yoga and would need to be part of the tenant improvements. Responding to a question from Commissioner Ramels whether citizens will be on the community center board, Ms. Rockwell answered that isn't yet decided, but the partnership is committed to having the community involved. Acting Deputy Superintendent added that Parks wants to program the new Belltown Park in conjunction with the community center and this is also new territory for the Department. Commissioner Ramels asked if this new approach fits in the community center Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) and Ms. Rockwell agreed that it does and that Ms. Everson would address the SLI later in this meeting.

Commissioner Angulo asked if the homeless are considered part of the community. Ms. Rockwell answered that Parks held a meeting at Mary's Place, with the shelter's staff serving refreshments. One person voiced a negative comment about the homeless using the facility and she stressed that parks and community centers are open to everyone.

Commissioner Kostka noted that YMCA stands for Young Men's Christian Organization and asked if they would operate the community center as an open public facility. Ms. Rockwell stated that the Y, which is the partner for operations — and not the YMCA — has re-branded itself as the "Y", with a focus on youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility. Parks will partner equally with the Y and ARC. The building will also be open for community groups to hold meetings and use the space. Commissioner Keith asked if the public will clearly see they are coming to a Parks Department community center. Ms. Rockwell and Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli stated they will. ARC already programs many of the Parks Department's community centers. The Department will work with both the Y and ARC, as neither wanted to take overall responsibility

for operating the facility. The Department believes this will be a good partnership, but it has not yet been determined how their roles will be divided. Commissioner Ramels asked that the Park Board be kept up to date as this progresses, as it may be a prototype for other partnerships.

Commissioner Kincaid asked if Seattle Police Department (SPD) will regularly drop in and out of the facility and Ms. Rockwell answered they will. The facility will provide the space and SPD will provide the officers' furnishings.

Commissioner Holme referred to the tenant improvements and noted that a kitchen is a costly investment and the lease is only for eight years. Who determines what improvements will be made? Ms. Rockwell replied that the Department has a well-defined protocol on what is provided in community centers. The public has indicated it wants a catering kitchen and that fits with the budget. It makes the building suitable to rent for weddings and parties and to serve snacks to youth who use the facility. It will have a large room that can be subdivided and a number of events can happen at once. Responding to an additional question from Commissioner Kincaid on whether the facility will have rental earnings, Acting Deputy Superintendent Friedli responded that Parks will not pay expenses to operate the facility; he has not yet heard what ARC and Y hope to receive in revenue to offset their costs. The partners must still discuss revenue sharing, utility sharing, custodial responsibilities, and scholarships. Commissioner Ramels referred to Associated Recreation Council's method of par fare; negotiations are not that far along.

Commissioner Holme requested that the Board receive an update when the agreement is more firm. Parks staff believe this will be in January and February and will schedule one of the Board's meetings at the facility after it opens. Commissioners thanked Ms. Rockwell for the briefing.

## **Briefing: City Council's Statement of Legislative Intent for Community Centers**

Carol Everson, Seattle Parks Finance Director, presented a briefing on the City Council's Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) for Seattle Parks' Community Centers. Prior to this meeting, Commissioners received information from Mayor McGinn's September 12 news event regarding the 2012 operation plan for the community centers, as well as a link to the many explanatory documents posted on the Park Department's web page at: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/centers/operations.htm>.

To hear the full presentation and the Board's discussion, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5971> and move cursor to position 87.0.

### ***Written Briefing Documents***

For this discussion, Ms. Everson focused on two of the documents on the web and included below.

## **Frequently Asked Questions about Proposed Changes in Community Center Management**

### **1. What's GOOD about this proposal? It just seems like another cut in City services to me.**

- All community centers remain open and serving the public
  - Our research into other cities facing similar budget problems showed that those that most tried to maintain the status quo, wound up closing the most centers.
- The management of community centers will be more flexible, efficient, and community focused
  - Public hours will be set to maximize community use, and this will be done in consultation with the community
  - Programs at nearby community centers will not be duplicative but will complement one another.
  - Community center performance will be more closely monitored and needed adjustments will be made quickly because geographic team management can shift resources among centers in the team.

- General tax revenues will be freed up to support other urgent needs. This plan saves \$1.23 million relative to the 2012 Endorsed Budget.
- The old management model served us well for over 20 years, but times have changed and Parks and Recreation must change too. Parks is excited about the possibilities that this way of operating provides for the communities we serve.

**2. What is the net impact of your proposal on community center public hours of operation?**

- In 2010 there were a total of **1,402** public hours per week available across all community centers. 26 community centers were open at least 51 hours per week. The typical center was open 53 hours per week in the winter (37 weeks) and 46 hours per week in the summer (15 weeks) for an annual average of 51 hrs per week. Eight centers were open more than standard hours. These hours do not include those for teen Late Night or other special programs.
- In 2011 there are a total of **1,238** public hours per week available across all community centers. This represents a reduction of 12 percent or 164 hours per week based on the designation of five sites as limited use and the closure of Rainier Beach Community Center for construction. Three limited use sites were open 30 hours per week and two were open 35 hours per week.
- In 2012, there will be a total of **1,095** public hours per week available across all community centers. Using maximum estimates of public hours (70, 45, and 25 hours per week for Level 1, Level 2a, and Level 2b services respectively) results in a further reduction of 12 percent or 143 hours per week in community center public hours. This reduction includes the conversion of Southwest Community Center to a Teen Life Center and the co-location of a Department of Neighborhood's Neighborhood Service Center at that site.

**3. Are community centers completely closed and vacant except for "public hours"?**

- First, let's define public hours. Public hours are times when anyone can drop in and use the community centers for many purposes. Adults might pay a fee for drop-in use of the gymnasium or fitness room, teens might hang out in the teen room after school, and parents with children might register for childcare or recreation programs.
- In "non-public hours," centers are still heavily used by participants in particular programs or by particular age groups. For instance, ARC childcare and ARC recreation classes are open to registered participants even during non-public hours. Also, rooms may be rented by a preschool or church or for meetings and celebrations. In this case the center is open to their participants or guests only. Finally, certain Parks programs such as the late night teen program, lifelong recreation, or specialized recreation programs may take place during non-public hours. During these times center use is restricted to those participating in the program.

**4. Why can't the general public also use centers when they are open for use by specific programs?**

- Parks staff in the building is limited during non-public hours. In general, a program or rental pays for one Parks staff person to open the doors and to see that nobody who isn't a participant enters the building. The program or rental leaders monitor only their participants in the space they are using.
- In order to monitor the rest of the building to see that there is no dangerous, inappropriate, or destructive activity taking place, it would require an additional Parks staff person. If there were sufficient funds to pay for this additional person and if there were sufficient demand for services by non-participants during these hours, Parks would create additional public hours. Parks is working on policies and procedures that would allow certain volunteers associated with renters to open and monitor the building during their programs. This, however, would reduce Parks staff present during non-public hours and make it even more difficult to open the facility to the general public.

**5. Did the City consider turning the management of the centers over to volunteers?**

- Our community centers are a highly complex business with a total 2011 operating budget of \$20.2 million (including both ARC and City expenses but excluding teen life centers, lifelong recreation, and special population program expenses). The centers generate about \$8.9 million of revenue (including both ARC and City revenues) with the City's General Fund covering the remaining \$11.3 million. They provide valued recreation services to all ages, help our youth and teens grow into productive citizens, serve as the center of a community by bringing people of all ages and abilities together, and are a community-building gateway for those new to America. We believe it is unlikely that the community would be able to provide the same level of complex and specialized services exclusively through the use of volunteers.
- Although Parks is planning to expand its use of volunteers in community centers, it takes City staff to recruit, train, and supervise these volunteers on a continuing basis. Also, certain activities require highly trained, and sometimes licensed, professionals for activities dealing with children and vulnerable adults. As such, volunteers can only be used for certain activities. This limits the possibility of centers being run entirely by volunteers if the community desires the same level and range of services.
- The City owns the community centers and is responsible for the safety, routine maintenance, and ongoing preservation of these public assets. Any individual or organization that staffs a center would need to foster a similar safe environment for staff and patrons to avoid the mistreatment of the city-owned facility. This may include situations ranging from a disruptive patron, to someone overdosing in the lobby, to a teenager taking refuge from street violence. These are all issues that may place significant financial and perhaps legal burdens on individuals or groups involved in the management of centers.
- Recreation employees are highly trained professionals who deal with a wide variety of issues while offering a broad range of recreation services to the public. We believe it would be very challenging both financially and legally to duplicate these services at a lower cost under a volunteer-run management model.

**6. Why join community centers into geographic teams?**

- The proposed change in the community center operational model divides our system into five geographic teams of five centers. Each team will be led by a Senior Recreation Program Coordinator and programmed in a coordinated fashion by two Assistant Recreation Center Coordinators. In addition, each community center will have staff assigned to it consistent with the service level provided through it.
- Geographic teams allow more flexibility and efficiency in the use of staff. Geographic team supervisors can reallocate staff and public hours among community centers in a team as circumstances change or special needs arise.
- Geographic team community centers can specialize, thus offering a wider range of services to the public. For instance, one community center might be open early and another late or one might specialize in fitness and another in arts.
- Coordinated programming across a geographic team means that there won't be a duplication of services (e.g., two yoga classes on Wednesday evening and none on Monday or Tuesday, egg hunts at all community centers in a team). We will also be better able to leverage internal resources and define team success rather than individual centers competing with each other. Having a single senior staff person in charge of each geographic team will increase consistency across the team, and having two staff program all the community centers in the team will be more efficient than having one programmer per community center.

**7. Why are there five geographic teams?**

- Parks considered several different options, including six or seven geographic teams. In the end, we chose five because it provided the maximum amount of programming options across all community centers.
- The advantage of five vs. six or seven geographic teams is that one can implement a management model in which one senior person is responsible for the overall management of all the community

centers in the team with support from two staff per team to work on coordinated programming at each center. Under a model with more geographic teams, fewer programming staff were available, which resulted in less programming flexibility across community centers.

**8. How were the service levels provided at each community center determined?**

- First a team of staff from Parks, the City Budget Office and City Council, assembled the best available data on the physical facilities available at each site, the current use of the community center, and the demographics surrounding it.
- From this data, specific measures were chosen and a maximum number of points assigned to the measure to reflect the reliability of the data and the overall weight attributed to it. The highest ranking community center for that measure was assigned the maximum points and the lowest ranking community center was assigned zero points. Those in-between the extremes got points proportional to their ranking. Finally, all points for all series were added together and compared to the totals for other community centers in their geographic team.

The City's Race and Social Justice Initiative provided important insights into the choice of measures used for the service level determinations. For instance, a variety of data reflecting paid use, drop-in use, physical facilities, and scholarships was used so that centers in lower-income neighborhoods would not be disadvantaged. Comparing centers within geographic teams rather than across the whole system also ensured that one area of the City would not receive disproportionately more or less service than another.

**9. Why didn't you use census data to measure the community needs?**

- Because Seattle is a compact, dense city and many of our community centers are quite close together geographically, a number of census tracts were within the service territories of more than one community center.
- There are also a range of income levels, ethnicities and other measures of community need even within one census district. A high average income, for instance, does not mean that there is not a need for services to those with low incomes.

The group concluded that using the number of individuals using a community center who received scholarships was a better measure of the need among those who actually use the community center.

**10. Why do some community centers with lower service levels have higher point totals than some community centers with higher service levels?**

- Point totals were compared within geographic teams, not to the entire collective group of community centers. This was one way to reflect the relative needs of different areas while keeping some geographic equity among different areas of the City.

**11. Why not just make geographic teams and have all community centers treated the same – NO DIFFERENT SERVICE LEVELS?**



- Just grouping the centers does not address differences in how the facilities are utilized by the community. It would continue the “cookie cutter” approach to community center management that was frequently criticized by the public during the first public meetings.
- In 2011, the City implemented five limited use sites, which essentially created a two service level system. However, the five community centers were chosen without an extensive analysis of usage patterns and community needs and they did not have professional Parks staff assigned to them. Both of these factors resulted in programming and service level issues. These deficiencies have been corrected in this new model.
- Grouping the community centers without delivering lower service levels at some would actually cost the City money: bringing the limited use sites back to full regular hours would cost more than the geographic management option saves. This means there would be a net cost increase rather than a further cost saving.

**12. Why do some geographic teams have one Level 1 community center while others have two Level 1 centers? How did you choose which community center would be the extra Level 1 site?**

- In order to preserve as many public hours as possible under the new service model, we chose to include either one or two Level 1 sites in each geographic team.
- The highest ranking site in each geographic team was budgeted and staffed for Level 1 service and one more site with Level 1 service was added in the north and south areas of the City. These extra Level 1 sites were the next highest ranking centers.

**13. Why do the number of Level 2a and Level 2b sites vary among geographic teams?**

- Level 1, Level 2a and Level 2b sites were distributed among geographic teams to ensure an equitable distribution of minimum public hours across the five geographic teams. Teams with more than one Level 1 site typically have more Level 2b sites. Teams with only one Level 1 site typically have more Level 2a sites.
- An extra Level 1 site generally replaced one of the sites that would otherwise have been a Level 2a site? Again, this was done to preserve as many public hours as possible.
- Because Rainier Beach Community Center is closed for construction, the southeast geographic team has only four community centers but two Level 1 sites.  
Within a geographic team, community centers with similar point totals are classified in the same level.

**14. How much more would it cost to provide Level 2a service rather than Level 2b service?? or provide Level 1 service rather than Level 2a service?**

- \$86,261 to change Level 2b service to Level 2a service  
\$56,048 to change Level 2a service to Level 1 service.

**15. Why is the staff budget higher for some sites compared with others providing the same service level?**

Some sites have extra staff associated with a teen late night program. The teen late night program is not changed by this proposal.

**16. What about Southwest Community Center? What’s happening to it?**

- Southwest Community Center is becoming a specialized teen site. The downstairs portion of the facility will be a Teen Life Center, as it is now. The preschool that currently meets upstairs will move downstairs since this use does not conflict with the teen use.
- The upstairs area will become a Neighborhood Service Center operated by the Department of Neighborhoods (DON). This will provide a place for residents to pay various City bills and to find out about the services offered by the City, including Parks and Recreation.
- The location of DON's outreach staff in a Parks facility will help all of our southwest community centers do a better job of connecting with their communities.  
The Southwest Pool will continue to operate as it does currently.

**17. Does this proposal hurt the Associated Recreation Council (ARC)?**

- ARC has been a true partner in putting together this proposal. They have been involved in the Community Center Advisory Team that advised the department throughout the option identification process.
  - They have offered, for the first time, to help pay for City staff that program both ARC and City run activities. The experience with the limited use sites this year has taught both ARC and Parks that Parks employees are crucial to our mutual success.
  - The total added payment to Parks from this community center operational model and a small increase in the PAR fee (the percent of gross revenues that ARC pays to the City) will mean that ARC is paying almost \$500,000 more per year to Parks.
- ARC recognizes the importance of Parks' operational changes to their success and believes that this added payment will help us both thrive in the coming years.

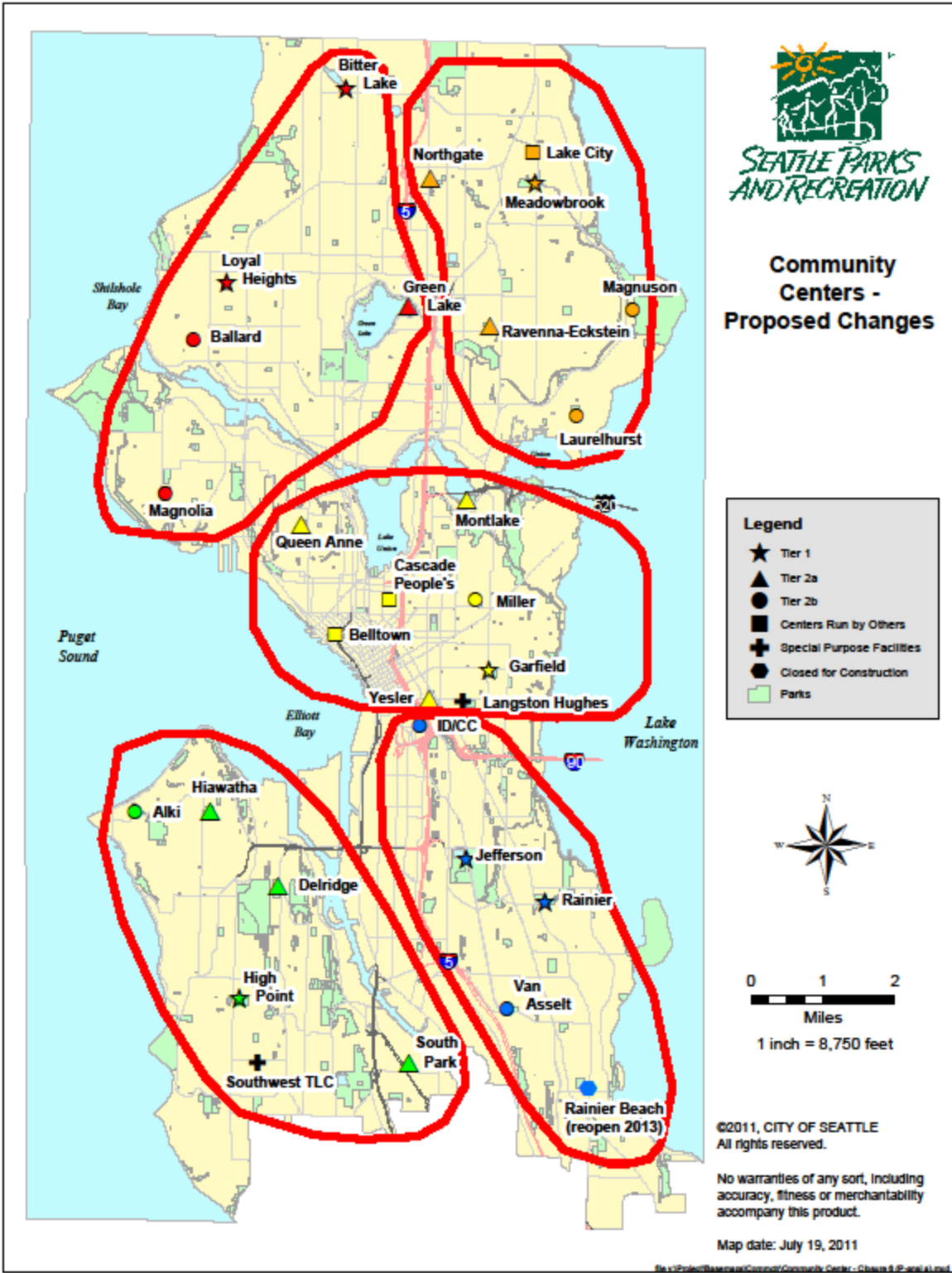
**18. What did you learn from the limited use community centers in 2011?**

- Parks learned that it is essential to have professional Parks staff assigned to a center. This enhances continuity, consistency, and connections with the community. It also permits better supervision and training of community volunteers.
  - Parks also learned that a community center can remain active outside of public hours through the provision of daycare, summer day camps, senior recreation activities, adaptive recreation, and other programs provided by Parks staff that program on a city-wide basis or by partners such as the Associated Recreation Councils (ARC).
  - Parks learned the difficulty and yet the value of community centers working together as a team. Each limited use site was paired with a regular community center that supported its management and helped with its programming. The regular site in the pair also learned that there was a limit to the help they could supply to a limited use site.
- Parks learned how important professional Parks staff is in supporting ARC through their programming of classes and planning of special events.

**19. What is the impact of this option on Parks staff?**

- This option results in a decrease in Parks staff of 13.63 full-time equivalents but 77 positions are affected by this change.
  - The current staffing model for a regular (i.e. not limited use) center consists of 5 FTE per community center: Coordinator, Assistant Coordinator, Recreation Leader, Recreation Attendant, and Maintenance or Utility Laborer.
  - The Geographic Team Model removes the Assistant Coordinator from each center and instead has two Assistant Coordinators per geographic team who work with the Coordinators to program the sites in a coordinated manner. This eliminates 11 Assistant Coordinator positions system-wide.
  - The Geographic Team Model also has a Sr. Recreation Program Coordinator position who is responsible for managing each team.
  - The staff remaining at each community center depends on the service level provided at the site. Level 1 sites have a Coordinator, a Recreation Leader, 1.5 Recreation Attendants, and a Maintenance or Utility Laborer (4.5 FTE total). Level 2a sites have a Coordinator, 0.75 Recreation Leader, 0.75 Recreation Attendant, and a Maintenance or Utility Laborer (3.5 FTE total). Level 2b sites have 0.5 Coordinator, 0.5 Recreation Leader, 0.5 Recreation Attendant, and 0.5 Maintenance or Utility Laborer (2.0 FTE total).
  - The Senior Coordinator positions provide more opportunities for advancement for employees.
  - Jobs are preserved by reducing rather than eliminating some positions. This allows some employees to retain benefits, even though their hours are reduced. There may also be opportunities for employees to work above their budgeted hours in place of temporary employees that otherwise would have been hired.
- This change also preserves employment relative to closing enough community centers to save the same amount of money.

- 20. Why did the City Council request that this analysis be done for community centers rather than other Parks and Recreation facilities such as swimming pools or athletic fields?**
- The City Council spent considerable time reviewing the Parks Department proposal for Limited Use Community Centers during the Fall of 2010.
  - Following that review, Council asked Parks to conduct further analysis on community centers, with the underlying idea that community centers, like many City functions, might be able to provide services in a different manner, be more responsive to community needs, and utilize less general fund monies.
  - City Council also asked Parks to work with the Rowing and Sailing Centers to chart a path toward substantial self-sufficiency that could be implemented in the 2013-2014 budget.
  - Based on the efforts of the past eight months, Council may ask for similar analysis of other areas of the Parks and Recreation budget.
- 21. Where can I get more detailed information on this proposal?**
- Go to <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/centers/operations.htm> to access a website with links to data, options, and information on the budget proposal.



To hear Ms. Everson's presentation and the Board's discussion, see To hear the full presentation and the Board's discussion, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5971> and move cursor to position 87.0. Following the discussion, Commissioners complimented Ms. Everson, who will retire at the end of 2011, on her excellent and informative presentations. Commissioners also complimented the work on the community center statement of legislative intent as extraordinary.

## **Old/New Business**

To hear the Board's discussion, see <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5971> and move cursor to position 154.1.

Board Membership: Earlier this year, Parks staff proposed increasing the Board's membership from seven to nine members, including a Get Engaged (youth) member who would serve a one- or two-year term. After discussion, Commissioners recommended increasing the membership to eight, with four City Council appointees and four mayoral appointees. One of the mayoral appointees would include the Get Engaged member. The Park Board also recommended that terms end on March 31, rather than December 31, to avoid requesting appointments and confirmations in the fall when Council's focus is on the City budget. This proposed legislation would result in Commissioners Holme, Kostka, and Ramels' terms ending on March 31, 2012.

Commissioner Holme stated he was recently notified by Parks staff that the Department will move ahead with its recommendation to the mayor to increase the membership to nine, with four members appointed by the mayor, four by City Council, and one from the Get Engaged program. The legislation will also recommend that terms end on March 31. The legislation will most likely become effective in 2012 as City Council is currently focused on the budget and will not consider the legislation before the end of the year. This results in three Commissioners' terms ending on December 31, rather than the anticipated date of March 31, 2012.

Commissioner Holme voiced his concerns. If the Department plans to add two new members, this results in five new members joining the Board in 2012. He urged the Department to move ahead as quickly as possible to fill the three upcoming vacancies, as well as expedite the legislation to change the number of members and date the terms end. Acting Deputy Superintendent added that the Department proposes legislation to the mayor who, after his review and approval, sends it to City Council for consideration and approval.

West Point Treatment Center: Commissioner Kostka requested that Parks staff schedule time on a future agenda for the Board to continue its discussion of odor control at West Point Treatment Center, which is managed by King County and located inside Discovery Park.

There being no other new business, the meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

Terry Holme, Chair  
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE \_\_\_\_\_