



# Minutes

Joint Board of Park Commissioners/Park District Oversight Committee

Via WebEx

Tuesday, May 28, 2020

6:30 p.m. to 7:45 p.m.

**Welcome –with Andréa Akita, Park District Oversight Committee Co-Chair**

## **Public Comment:**

### **Mark- Community Member**

Mark is concerned with a growing encampment near 15th avenue NE and University Way near Olga Park. Mark said the block sees heavily use for recreation, features a plant variety, and a paved bike trail. Mark requests increased mowing and park maintenance for property.

### **Alison Stevens- Olga and Cowen Parks, Park User**

Alison says SPR staff are heroes for the contributions they have made to public and open spaces during the pandemic. Alison cites “toxic and harmful” activities at Olga and Cowen parks. Alison comments on the effects of density and socio-economic disparity in the neighborhood. Alison offers to provide documentation of the activities cited and requests a park clean up.

### **Leone Martin- Olga and Cowen Parks, Park User**

Leone read a letter from Rick King about Olga and Cowen Parks. The letter outlines incidents of missing/moved municipal signage and cones, dumping that has rendered the park a “bio hazard area”. Rick cited a struggle with another community member over a cell phone in the park that resulted in a call to the Seattle Police Department. Rick says the phone was recovered and requests encampments be removed from the parks.

### **Egils Virsnieks- Olga and Cowen Parks, Park User**

Egils reports an encampment in Olga and Cowen parks. Egils requests Olmsted parks be prioritized for Navigation Team deployment and encampment clean ups.

### **Ed Bronsdon- Outdoors for All Foundation, Executive Director**

Ed thanks Seattle Parks and Recreation for their partnership and expressed hope for its continuation and growth.

### **Ryan Dalrymple- Olga and Cowen Parks, Park User**

Ryan reports the dumping of garbage, hazardous waste and other dangerous items at Olga and Cowen Parks. Ryan requests a park clean up.

### **Jay Fulcher- Olga and Cowen Parks, Park User**

Jay reports graffiti, vandalism and dumping at Olga Park. Jay requests a park clean up.

### **John Barber- Open Space Advocates, Friends of Frink Park**

John cites a proposal from the mayor's office to transfer \$10 mil in Seattle Park District capital funds to what John describes as "base operations". John cites the City's original intent for the Seattle Park District. John requests Seattle Parks and Recreation discontinue use of gas-powered landscaping tools. John requests Seattle Parks and Recreation hire additional labor to increase our use of manual landscaping practices.

**Bill Pickard- Rainier Beach Link2Lake Open Space Steering Committee**

Bill expresses opposition to the proposed budget changes affect the Seattle Park District. Bill provided an update on the steering committee's Be'er Sheva Park Improvement efforts and requests the prioritization the projects in upcoming budget and policy decisions.

**Jessica Breznau- Small business owner, Southside Booty Camp**

Jessica is expressed a wish to continue permitted work in Seward park. Jessica requests improved ADA access at Seward Park.

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**Superintendent's Report– with Jesús Aguirre, Seattle Park and Recreation Superintendent**

**What's open/What's Closed** – reminder that anything OPEN requires social distancing:

<b>Amenity</b>	<b>Status</b>
Adult Fitness Equipment	Closed
Athletic Field Use	Open for groups of 5 and under for non-organized use
Basketball	Open for groups of 5 and under
BBQ Grills	Open for groups of 5 and under
Bike Trails	Open
Beaches	See Swimming Areas
Boat Launches (hand carry & motorized)	Most open except Ferdinand St.
Boat Moorages	Open to renters only
Community Centers	Closed
Community Gardens	Open
Disc Golf	Open for groups of 5 and under
Dog Off-Leash Areas	Open
Environmental Learning Centers	Closed
Fire Pits	Closed
Fishing	Open
Japanese Garden	Opens July 14, tickets available now
Volunteer Park Conservatory	Closed
Gardens	Open Parking lots to other gardens may be closed.
Golf	Open for groups of 5 and under
Hiking Trails	Open
Lawn Bowling	Operated by third party

Paths	Open
Pickleball Courts	Open for groups of 5 and under
Picnic Shelters	Open for reservations of groups of 5 and under
Picnic Tables	Open for groups of 5 and under
Play Areas	Closed
Pools	Closed
P-Patch Community Garden	Operated by Dept. of Neighborhoods
Rental Facilities	Closed
Restrooms and Drinking Fountains	Open
Scuba Diving	Open
Skateparks/Spots	Open

### Superintendent's Report Cont'd...

**What's open/What's Closed** – reminder that anything OPEN requires social distancing:

<b>Amenity</b>	<b>Status</b>
Spray Parks	Closed
Swimming Areas with Lifeguards	7/1 opening delayed. Projected opening on 7/15 at Madison, Matthews, Mount Baker, West Green Lake, and Pritchard.
Tennis Court or Tennis Backboard (Outdoor)	Open
Wading Pools	Closed
Weddings and Ceremonies	Closed
Volleyball (outdoor)	Open for groups of 5 and under
Zoo; Aquarium;	Open
Museums; Restaurants	Operated by third party

**These popular parks will continue to close at 9:30pm:**

Alki Beach, Cal Anderson, Carkeek, Discovery, Gas Works, Golden Gardens, Green Lake, Kubota Garden, Lincoln, Magnuson, Seward, Volunteer, Washington Park Arboretum, West Seattle Stadium, Myrtle Edwards, Judkins, Woodland

**Parking restrictions** continue at some parks to limit crowding. You can get the latest information on which parking lots are open and which are closed at [parkways.seattle.gov](http://parkways.seattle.gov)

**Regional Park Lots Currently Closed:**

Green Lake, Magnuson, Gas Works, Discovery, Lincoln, Seward, Washington Park Arboretum, Carkeek, Kubota Garden, Volunteer, Madrona, Mt. Baker, Ferdinand St. Boat Launch, Magnuson Jr. League Lot, Lower Woodland

**Regional Park Lots Currently Open:**

Woodland/Lower Woodland, West Seattle Stadium, Stan Sayres (boat ramp use), Atlantic City Boat Ramp, Eddie Vine Boat Ramp, Magnuson Boat Ramp, Magnuson Tennis Center, Magnuson Arena Sports, Magnuson Children's Hosp, Magnuson Brig, Arboretum (Visitors Center, Foster Island Dr and Wilcox Bridge)

\*Parking lots at neighborhood parks remain open

### **Regional Park Lots Projected to Re-open Soon:**

Pritchard Island Beach, Matthews Beach, W Green Lake Beach, Mount Baker

\*Residents are encouraged to visit any of our 400+ neighborhood parks, or to bike or walk to the larger destination parks.

### **SPR Reopening Guidance Available in 8 non-English Languages**

Phase 2 reopening guidance for Seattle Parks and Recreation programs and facilities is now available in eight non-English languages including Spanish, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Somali, Amharic, and Tagalog.

### **South Parking Lot at Golden Gardens to Reopen**

Beginning this weekend, the south parking lot near the entrance to Golden Gardens Park will be reopened for drop off and limited parking including ADA parking to help reduce congestion and improve flow of traffic. The parking lot (and the park) close at 9:30 p.m. every night. The road above the park, Golden Gardens Drive, remains closed to vehicles, creating a safe place for people to walk and bike.

### **Japanese Garden Opens on July 14**

The Seattle Japanese Garden will be reopening on Tuesday, July 14. In order to ensure the safety of visitors, the Garden has implemented a timed ticketing system and COVID-19 health and safety precautions. This year the Garden is celebrating its 60th anniversary! For more information visit the Japanese Garden website.

### **SPR Work at Cal Anderson Park During Park Closure**

The park remains closed for the time being. During the closure Facilities crews have installed bollards at north entry points, secured benches, and removed graffiti on buildings, sidewalks, walls, and lamp posts. The graffiti on the tennis courts can't be removed without destroying the surfacing so they will need to be resurfaced when funding is available. Staff replaced painted and broken light globes, boarded up restroom doors until the locks can be repaired and are re assessing irrigation breaks. Grounds crews have mowed the grass, cleaned and pruned planting beds, and removed garbage and debris. The Bobby Morris turf field will be cleaned this week. Regarding the community garden, the current plan is to leave the garden in place until the late summer/fall harvest, and then work with the garden creator and interested community members on a long-term plan. Cal Anderson photos.

### **Food Lifeline Distributes Emergency Food**

SPR partnered with Food Lifeline to distribute emergency food boxes at Rainier Community Center on Wednesday, July 8. Food Lifeline is distributing thousands of boxes this week at five locations around the region, including Rainier Beach CC. The boxes contain fresh produce and assorted dairy items.

### **Free Summer Meals in Parks**

In partnership with United Way of King County and the Seattle Human Services Department, SPR will be offering free summer meals this summer at parks throughout Seattle for youth ages 1-18. Each site will be open from Monday through Friday from July 6 – August 21, and will be offering a limited amount of take-away activity kits for youth to enjoy at home or in the park. Each meal will consist of lunch and a snack that can either be eaten at home or in the park.

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**Old/New Committee Business- with Andréa Akita, Park District Oversight Committee Co-Chair**

A letter to the Mayor’s Office regarding the proposed upcoming budget reductions should have been circulated to Board of Park Commissioners and Park District Oversight Committee members for review in June 2020. The committees discussed additional edits to be made. Members committed to sending revisions to Tom Byers for aggregation. Tom Byers committed to circulating a second draft to the committees for additional review.

**Covid-19 Financial Impacts: Citywide Context and SPR 2020 Budget Changes– with Ben Noble, City Budget Director and Jesús Aguirre, Seattle Park and Recreation Superintendent**

**Summary:** Global pandemic, economic downturn and increased community demand for anti-racism action shaping the rebalancing of the 2020 budget. City is facing a 233 million shortfall. Global pandemic, economic downturn and increased community demand for anti-racism action shaping the rebalancing of the 2020 budget. City is facing a 233 million shortfall. Global pandemic, economic downturn and increased community demand.

Citywide Context

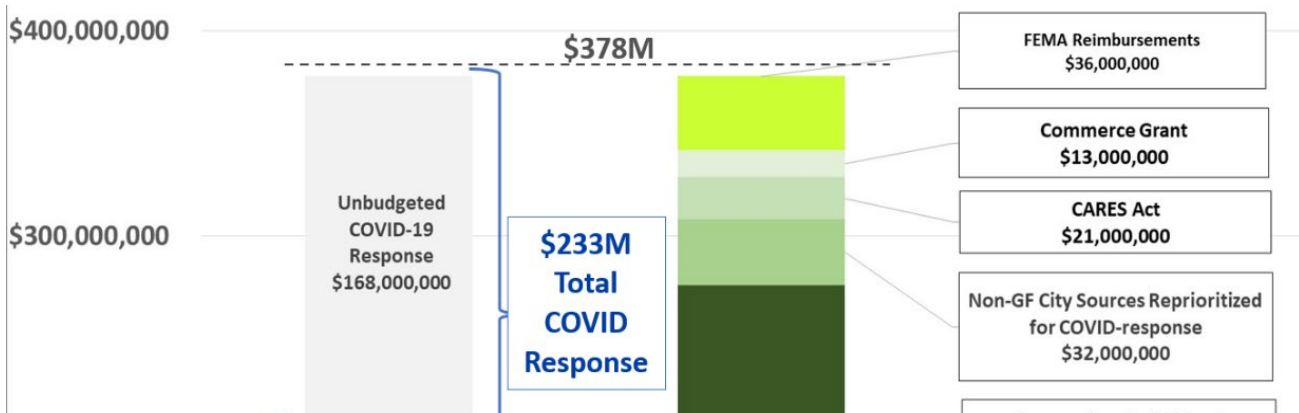
**Challenges Facing Our City**

A public health pandemic that is killing friends, families, and neighbors and COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted communities of color. Expected spending of \$233 million on COVID-19 response, focusing on the needs of the most vulnerable and BIPOC communities. Economic devastation and job losses that have led to record unemployment, an unprecedented loss of \$300 million in revenue, and community needs including food access and housing assistance. Now more than ever it is critical to preserving critical budget priorities that serve communities of color and historically underserved communities. A movement to demand anti-racist action, to divest and rethink policing, and end institutional racism.

**Rebalancing 2020 Budget: Address Revenue Shortfall and Cost of Responding to COVID-19 Pandemic**

The City’s General Fund budget was balanced assuming almost \$1.5 billion in revenue. Updated forecast confirms that General Fund revenues could fall \$200 million short of the total anticipated in the 2020 adopted budget. The total funding gap for general government services could exceed \$300 million because other revenues, such as the soda tax, short-term rental tax, commercial parking tax, and earned revenues at the Seattle Center and Parks Department will also fall short of forecast. The public health challenge and economic impacts created by COVID-19 has demanded a robust response from the City. We anticipate total spending of \$233 million in response.

**Figure 1.** Rebalancing the 2020 General Fund Budget: Budget Changes and Rebalancing Strategy Visualization



**Covid-19 Financial Impacts Cont'd...**

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**Rebalancing 2020 Budget: Budget Changes and Rebalancing Details**

**Table 1.** Covid-19 Response Spending

Below is a breakdown of the City's estimated unbudgeted expenses associated with Covid-19 response referred to in Figure 1.

<b>COVID-19 Spending</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Respond to Emergency COVID-19 impacts	\$38,620,000
Protect our most vulnerable neighbors experiencing homelessness and address housing insecurity	\$39,400,000
Support essential household and community needs	\$34,110,000
Assist small businesses, artists, and cultural organizations as they struggle for survival	\$5,210,000
Continue critical supports for First Responders	\$35,740,000
Maintain city services and support City employees who provide them	\$80,150,000
<b>TOTAL (Of this total, approx. \$65 million is reprioritized General Fund)</b>	<b>\$233,200,000</b>

**Table 2.** One Time Resources, Reserves and the Coronavirus Relief Fund

Strong financial finish to 2019 will help mitigate 2020 financial impacts. Proposal for balancing 2020 and 2021 uses a portion of Emergency Funds for 2020 (~25%), but saves a significant share (~75%) for 2021 to mitigate impacts in 2021. The CRF provides a means to pay for the existing City resources now being used to respond the COVID-19 crisis at a time the General Fund cannot sustain those services.

Source	Amount
2019 Year-End Fund Balance and Other One-time Resources	\$36,000,000
Emergency Fund and Rainy-Day Fund	\$29,000,000
Coronavirus Relief Fund	\$65,000,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$130,000,000</b>

### Covid-19 Financial Impacts Cont'd...

**Table 3.** Budget Reductions and Reprioritization of Levy & MPD Resources Breakdown

Below is a breakdown of the City's planned budget reductions and reprioritization of Levy & Seattle Park District funds referred to in Figure 1.

Budget Reductions and Reprioritization of Levy & MPD Resources	Amount
Hold vacancies, delay hiring, reduce overtime	(\$26,500,000)
Reprioritization of Levy/MPD Resources (Details in Table 4)	(\$24,500,000)
Travel, training, supplies, etc.	(\$6,100,000)
Consultants and Contracts	(\$5,500,000)
Neighborhood Matching Fund (NMF)	(\$1,500,000)
Other – including GF-funded technology and capital projects	(\$5,200,000)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(\$69,300,000)</b>

**Table 4.** Reprioritization of Levy and MPD Resources Details

For each of the affected departments, the revenues earned by the City will no longer provide the funding needed to pay for the base operations which the levies were intended to supplement. The basic budget approach is redirect funding that was to pay for capital projects or expanded programmatic funding to

support these base operational costs. The capital projects will be deferred but could be funded again in the future.

Source	Amount
Move Seattle Levy	\$10,000,000
Metropolitan Parks District	\$10,000,000
Families, Education, Preschool and Promise Levy	\$2,000,000
Library Levy	\$1,600,000
Reprioritize Grant Funding	\$900,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$24,500,000</b>

### **Covid-19 Financial Impacts Cont'd...**

#### **Legislative Action Needed for 2020 Rebalancing**

- Ordinances to reprioritize Levy and MPD resources
- Ordinance to authorize spending from the Emergency and Rainy Day Funds, and resolution to defer repayment
- Resolution to temporarily expand use of REET dollars to pay for debt service
- Second quarter supplemental and grant acceptance ordinances
- Grant acceptance and appropriation of State Commerce funding
- Grant acceptance and appropriation of Federal Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF)
- 2020 Budget revision ordinance
- 2019 Carry Forward and Exception ordinances

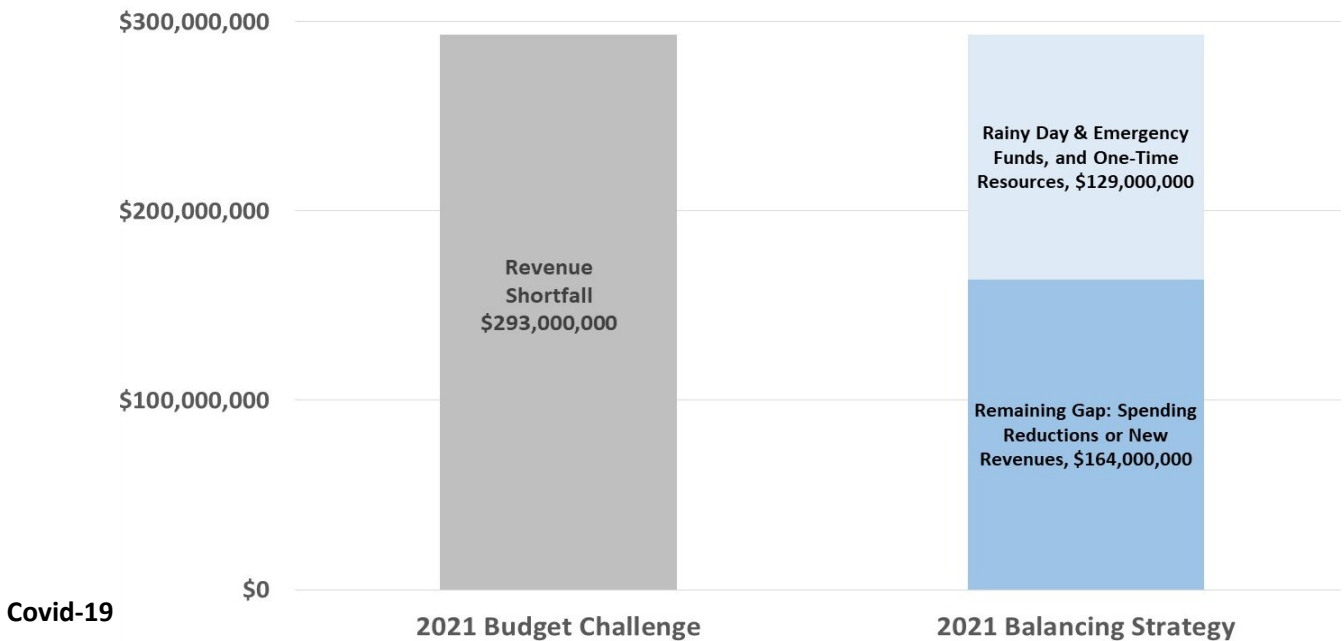
#### **Rebalancing 2020 Budget: 2021 Outlook**

Advocacy for new state and federal resources. Draw down remainder of Rainy Day and Emergency Funds, and other one-time resources. Remaining 2021 budget gap exceeds \$160 million. New revenues may address some of this shortfall, but economic impact of COVID will still force deep reductions in City spending, and thus in City services. Labor costs are roughly 65% of overall General Fund spending, so impacts to the City workforce are unavoidable. Layoffs will be the most direct impacts, but negotiations with the City’s unions may also provide alternative cost-savings strategies. Departments have been requested to develop proposals to reduce their 2021 budgets by 5%-10% relative to what would be their baseline spending. CBO will review opportunities to again redirect Levy and MPD resources. These strategies alone will be insufficient to rebalance. New revenues or additional cost savings will be needed to balance the 2021 budget. Likely needs to be a combination of both.



Forecasts indicate that the economic impacts of COVID-19 will last for several years. Approach budget needs to acknowledge that this is not a short-run crisis. \$100 million investments in BIPOC communities will be led by community engagement process this summer.

**Figure 2.** Balancing the General Fund in 2021: Budget Challenge and Rebalancing Strategy Visualization



SPR 2020 Budget Changes

**Summary:** In response to declining revenues from the current economic situation resulting from COVID-19, SPR has pursued a range of strategies to rebalance the 2020 budget, which I’ll review over the next few slides.

As discussed at our May 28 meeting, a key tenet of SPR’s response to COVID-19 to date has been to provide resources to support these mission-essential functions. SPR’s budget proposal for 2020 maintains support for these functions, which are critical to emergency response.

In 2020, SPR has observed three rebalancing strategies:

1. Focus on Essential Functions- Throughout our pandemic response, SPR will continue focusing the following services:
  - providing emergency shelter facilities and staffing,
  - supporting emergency food programs,
  - supporting emergency childcare for essential workers,
  - comfort station maintenance and cleaning,
  - HR support for all SPR employees,
  - Daily cleaning, litter and garbage removal,
  - Navigation team outreach (homeless individuals),
  - Social distancing support and education, customer responsiveness,

- financial management,
- landslide/environmental hazard response,

Funds	General Fund	Park District	Real Estate Excise Tax	Sweetened Beverage Tax	Community Development Block Grant	TOTAL
Reduced Spending	(\$5.8 m)		(\$5.0 m)	(\$0.4 m)	(\$0.7 m)	(\$11.9 m)
Park District Realignment (to backfill GF cut)	(\$10.0 m)	(\$10.0 m) capital \$10.0 m operating				(\$10.0 m)

- maintaining essential life safety systems,
  - providing agency leadership/situational awareness and
  - active asset management and maintenance.
2. Pursuit of Federal Reimbursements- SPR is tracking expenses that may be eligible for federal reimbursement, including potentially FEMA and Coronavirus Relief Fund reimbursements.
  3. Reduce Spending- Per City Budget Office guidance, since March 2020, SPR has frozen spending on all discretionary, non-essential and/or non COVID-19 related spending until the end of 2020. This includes peak season temporary labor that does not significantly impact core services such as daily cleaning and litter removal. SPR has eliminated all travel and training expenses, suspended consultant funding for any non-contractual obligation and restricted any overtime not related to COVID-19.
  4. Seattle Park District Realignment- Identified expenditure savings within SPR’s operating budget will not be enough to mitigate the impacts of projected revenue shortfalls. The Park District provides a steady stream of revenue and has a high degree of flexibility in the types of programs and services it can fund.  
In 2020, \$10 million of capital Park District funding will be redirected to support core operating services originally planned to supported by General Fund. This realignment mitigates General Fund losses only. Additional Park District shifts are expected later in 2020 to offset Park and Recreation Fund (earned revenue) losses. In addition, the Seattle Aquarium will be allowed to use their Park District allocation more flexibly in 2020.

**Table 5.** 2020 Revenue and Expenditure Reductions Summary

**Note:** The table below does not reflect impacts on 2020 Park and Recreation Fund (earned) revenues and expenses, which are still in flux. SPR will continue assessing impacts and anticipates proposing further reductions and/or realignments later this year.

Table 5 provides a summary of cost reductions identified for 2020. This proposal reflects reductions to specific funding sources including General Fund, Real Estate Excise Tax, Sweetened Beverage Tax, and

Community Development Block Grants; these reductions are necessary to rebalance revenues and expenditures within each of these funds and/or to support higher priority needs related to COVID-19.

Preliminary projections indicate that revenue loss from March – September could be \$23 million, but these estimates are still in flux. SPR anticipates that additional budget legislation will be developed later in the year to address the Park and Revenue fund shortfall. SPR may experience impacts well into 2021 depending on future COVID-19 response and recovery needs.

**Table 6. 2020 Operating Expense Reductions**

Reductions	General Fund	Sweetened Beverage Tax*
Spending reductions (hiring freeze, reducing non-essential overtime, consultant services, training/travel)	(\$4.1 m)	
Reduce Seasonal Hires in Maintenance Lines of Business	(\$1.7 m)	
Water-filling Stations (redirected to support the Grocery Voucher Program)		(\$0.27 m)
Summer Youth Programming Expansion (redirected to support the Grocery Voucher Program).		(\$0.15 m)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(\$5.8 m)</b>	<b>(\$0.4 m)</b>

*\*Per Ordinance 126063, Sweetened Beverage Tax reductions already taken)*

Table 6 provides a summary of the key operating expense reductions for General Fund and Sweetened Beverage Tax. These include low-impact savings such as holding vacancies, reducing non-COVID overtime, reducing consultant services, and restricting training/travel expenses; reductions to seasonal hires for park maintenance (which will reduce routine/deferred maintenance work); reductions to seasonal hires for shops crews (which would impact our ability to respond to lower priority maintenance/custodial work); and a reduction to one-time SBT funding for water-filling stations and summer program expansions.

**Table 7. 2020 Capital Expense Reductions**

Reductions	REET	CDBG	Park District
Reduce Acquisition Fund Balance	(\$0.02 m)		(\$1.0 m)
Developing Land-Banked Sites	(\$1.3 m)		(\$4.7 m)
Athletic Field Replacement Projects ( <i>Soundview, Ballard Playfield reduced scope</i> )	(\$1.4 m)		(\$3.4 m)
Delay Queen Anne Turf Field Conversion	(\$1.8 m)		
Battery Street Portal Park Design Work			(\$0.6 m)
Municipal Energy Efficiency Projects ( <i>community centers</i> )	(\$0.4 m)		
Activating & Connecting to Greenway Projects			(\$0.3 m)
Underspend/Savings from the Seattle Conservation Corps Parks Upgrade Program		(\$0.66 m)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>(\$4.9 m)</b>	<b>(\$0.66 m)</b>	<b>(\$10 m)</b>

Note: Some of these projects are jointly funded among REET and Park District.

Table 7 provides a summary of the key capital expense reductions (REET, CDBG, Park District). The impacted projects include:

- **Reduce Acquisition Funding** (cuts one-time funding that had not yet been allocated for acquisition projects. Both REET and Park District impacted).
- **Reducing Land-Banked Site development funding** (both REET and Park District impacted)  
Sites affected include: 48th & Charlestown, Ernst Park Addition Development, Morgan Junction RUV, Wedgewood, and West Seattle Junction.
- **Athletic Field replacement projects** – Delaying Soundview synthetic field conversion, Queen Anne synthetic conversion, scoping down Ballard Playfield project, but continue lighting replacements.
- **Battery Street Portal Park Design** (planning and design costs)
- **Municipal Energy Efficiency Projects** – reduce funding that would have contributed to community center stabilization projects to align with 2021 construction timeline
- **CDBG reductions for the Seattle Conservation Corps.** Due to COVID, the Corps has reduced the number of enrollees from 25 to 16, which impacts the number of Parks Upgrade Programs that can be completed (which CDBG funds). SPR also anticipates an increase in CSBG funding for the SCC (estimated at \$260k).

### **Proposal to Delay Six-Year Seattle Park District Planning Cycle**

As you all are aware, in mid-March, we paused the Park District 2021-2026 funding cycle process. We now look to what lies ahead for this funding source in the context of pandemic response.

Significant ongoing financial uncertainty, emergency response, and social distancing requirements impair planning and engagement

Annual Park District budget to be developed for 2021 (building on 2015-2020 cycle)

Plan to resume public engagement in early 2021

Park District Board to likely early August review legislation for 2020 realignment and shift in planning cycle

The City Council acting as the Park District Board is meeting early August and will review several pieces of legislation to enable these 2020 Park District budget changes and the longer-term Park District 6-year cycle delay

These include:

#### **2020 budget:**

Park District Resolution amending the 2020 Revised Park District budget

City Council Resolution temporarily suspending the 2020 General Fund commitment to SPR. These 2020 changes will bring SPR's General Fund allocation significantly below this floor, which is permitted in the ILA in periods of "exigent economic circumstances" with a  $\frac{3}{4}$  resolution vote by Council

#### **Interlocal Agreement Amendment**

Revision to Section 4.3 (Six Year Planning Cycles section) to allow temporary delay of the six-year planning timeframe, and instead allow an annual budget in the event of a natural disaster, economic emergency, or other emergency (e.g., a pandemic)

[See the presentation.](#)

**Recommendations/Decisions Made:** NA