



Minutes|Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners

100 Dexter Ave N/Kenneth R. Bounds Boardroom

Remote accessibility via Zoom

Thursday, July 10, 2025

6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Attendance

Present: Diamond, Leonor, Nakamura (co-chair), Flinn, Haile-Leul, Chisholm Clare, Lerer

Absent: Baum, Mays, Meng

SPR Staff and Presenters: Diaz, Harrang, Melake, Ward, Hoff, Burtzos

Welcome, Introductions & Land Acknowledgement

Nakamura calls the meeting to order at 6:30 pm and provides logistical instructions for in-person and remote attendees.

Commissioners and SPR staff introduce themselves.

Nakamura reads the land acknowledgement.

Nakamura introduces the consent agenda: meeting minutes from the 6/14/25 BPRC meeting and tonight's meeting agenda. Flinn calls for a vote to approve the consent agenda, Lerer seconds. The vote is 6 in favor, none opposed; Leonor abstains. The vote passes.

Adopted: 6/12/25 BPRC Meeting Minutes

Adopted: 7/10/25 BPRC Meeting Agenda

Public Comment

The BPRC heard public testimony on the following topics:

- SPR Environmental Education program staffing and funding;
- Permit availability and classification for sauna concession;
- Concerns about proposed Magnuson Park pickleball project;
- Park use and concerns about SPD response at Denny Blaine Park

Diaz briefly responds to public commenters.

Flinn asks for an update on previous correspondence regarding beach volleyball court availability and maintenance. Diaz notes the ongoing difficulties for volleyball maintenance, particularly at Golden Gardens Park, but affirms that SPR maintenance is aware of the issues and is prioritizing service at affected locations.

Superintendent's Report

Anthony-Paul (AP) Diaz, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, delivers the report.

Parks & Recreational Services

FIFA Club World Cup 2025 Watch Parties at Hing Hay and Bitter Lake Park: On Monday, June 23, SPR hosted a FIFA Club World Cup 2025 watch party at Hing Hay Park. Fans gathered to watch the highly anticipated match between the Seattle Sounders and Paris Saint-Germain, played at Lumen Field. The event featured a mobile big screen and support staff provided by the Park Activation Unit, creating a lively and inclusive space for the Chinatown-International District community to enjoy the global passion of soccer in the heart of downtown. The gathering attracted approximately 280 attendees, including field trips from the Wing Luke Museum and many community elders. The Bitter Lake Park Watch Party had an estimated 250 attendees. They served ice cream and had a few food trucks games, in addition to raffles for our park patrons. The final watch party will be at Van Asselt Community Center on July 13th.

2025 Seattle Pride Parade: Pictured above is SPR's colorful and wonderful float, designed and built by staff. I was thrilled to ride with SPR colleagues and wave flags in support of LGBTQ+ staff and communities. A big congratulations and kudos to all involved, from planning and prep to the day-of festivities -- awesome work, team!

Free 2025 Summer Meals and Playground Activities at Parks: This summer, SPR is teaming up with United Way of King County to offer a free drop-in program featuring meals and playground activities. Running daily from June 30 to August 22, rain or shine, this program will be available at seven park locations across Seattle. A free lunch and snack will be offered to youth ages 0 to 18. Free playground activities are open for kids and teens and may include arts, crafts, board games, and organized recreational games. This program, in partnership with Seattle Human Services and United Way, will help guarantee that every child in our shining city has access to a free, healthy meal.

Parks & Recreational Services: Recreation

Seattle Mentors Appreciation: 150+ attended the Seattle Mentors Culmination event for our Empowerment Exchange cohort held at Garfield Teen Life Center. Kudos to Latrina Dickerson, at Garfield Teen Life Center, who was a major Force in making this event a success – going above and beyond the call of duty!

Youth Leadership Committee Prepares Lunches for Neighborhood Tiny Home Community Maple Leaf Village: The Youth Leadership Committee planned a service project to provide sack lunches to a local Tiny Home location. The youth helped create the menu, grocery shop, put together the lunches and delivered them to the Tiny Home location up the street. Unlike past experiences with dropping off lunches to Tiny Homes, this location is a confidential site, and we were not allowed access inside.

Parks & Recreational Services: Parks and Environment / Facilities

Cleaning the Pavillion from top to bottom: On July 1, the Seattle Parks Enhancement Crew Team (ECT) completed a thorough cleaning of The Pavilion at Occidental Square. Their efforts are part of a broader initiative to prepare and beautify the park for the busy summer season. The team's work ensures that the square remains a welcoming and vibrant space for residents and visitors to enjoy community events, leisure, and outdoor activities throughout the warmer months.

Laurelhurst Community Center: Our crew hard at work trading crumbled concrete for fresh, smooth asphalt and helping, helping pave the way to safer public spaces for everyone. It's more than just a surface fix; these upgrades are a solid step toward enhancing our parks, paths, and gathering spaces across the city. This work lays the groundwork for a better, more accessible community experience.

Stan Sayres Memorial Park: Our SPR Recreation Equipment Crew is working hard to update and install new signage at Stan Sayres Memorial Park. Their efforts make a real difference—helping to ease congestion, improve turnover, and support sustainable transportation options.

It's always great to see our amazing staff working hard to make practical improvements that enhance the function, feel and user experience in our parks.

Parks and Capital Development

I-5 Colonnade “Yup!” Pump Track Opening: Seattle Parks and Recreation and Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance (EMBA) recently completed the I-5 Colonnade Pump Track! This pump track is a community-driven project led by the Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance. The goal was to modernize the Tqalu Skills Zone section of the existing mountain bike park, with a new paved adaptable pump track. This revitalized space will provide a welcoming experience for users of all ages and abilities.

Park Project Updates

Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Park: In collaboration with community organizations, SPR built the Phase one Garden at Martin Luther King, Jr. Civil Rights Memorial Park. This garden will support the BIPOC urban farming organization Clean Green's youth programming and bring the community together to amplify racial and social justice initiatives. This helps momentum for the MLK Memorial Garden Development Project, planned for the southeast hillside of the park. As part of this project, SPR and community members built the garden planters in preparation for the “Planting Party Meet ‘n’ Greet” that occurred on June 21. As you can see in the pictures above, the community came to help with the planting. On Saturday, July 12 from 11 am to 2 p.m. SPR is hosting a celebration of the planters and asking for community input on a vision for the placement of a permanent memorial garden.

South Park Spray Park: Construction is underway on the brand-new South Park Spray Park! Teams reviewed the new pump room structure, planned equipment installation, and the piping and underground elements that will support the spray features. This work is part of bringing a much-anticipated new spray park to the South Park neighborhood, providing more opportunities for outdoor play and community gathering. It is great to watch the progress as we build this new amenity for the South Park community from the ground up! This project is part of the broader South Park Community Center and Site development project.

Upcoming Events

Summer Events at Seattle Parks and Community Centers: Summer is here, and Seattle's parks and community centers are buzzing with exciting events for everyone to enjoy! From outdoor movies and music festivals, to community BBQs and sports tournaments. We are excited to provide opportunities for folks to enjoy our parts and build community. Please visit parkways.seattle.gov to find dates, times and more information on upcoming events.

June BPRC Meeting Follow-up

I wanted to take this opportunity to follow-up on a few issues that came up at the June BPRC meeting:

Lake Washington Boulevard Improvements: Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR), in partnership with the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) and the community, is moving forward with Phase 2 of the Lake Washington Boulevard Renovations Project. The construction is set to begin mid-July/early August 2025 and continue through fall 2025. These improvements will build upon the work

completed during Phase 1, further enhancing safety and access along the corridor. We have provided you with a press release, that went out yesterday, that has additional information on the project.

Madrona Park Beach Play Area Renovation Project Schedule: The project was reprioritized during COVID. We hope to have the project completed by the 3rd quarter of 2026.

Golden Gardens Beach Volleyball: The sand courts are maintained as part of regular beach maintenance. SPR will continue regular sand sifting to reduce safety hazards, which includes glass, rocks and other large debris. We are keeping the sand levels consistent and hoping newly placed onsite tools will allow for volunteers/court users to groom the sand before and after usage. I understand that SPR has scheduled a meeting with folks from the Beach Volleyball community to discuss some of the concerns that have been raised.

More information on the project scope and timelines for these projects, in addition to other SPR updates, can be found on our pathways blog at pathways.seattle.gov and/or our website at www.seattle.gov/parks

Diaz pauses for questions from the Board.

Chisholm Clare asks if the I-5 Colonnade Park Pump Track is the first and only paved pump track in Seattle. Diaz confirms.

Nakamura asks if participation in summer meal events is down this year. Diaz notes that SPR is coordinating with the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs but does not have data on this summer's events.

Partner Spotlight: Downtown Seattle Association

Owen Harrang, Director of Public Realm Operations with the Downtown Seattle Association, delivers the presentation.

Harrang introduces the Downtown Seattle Association (DSA)'s mission: to create a healthy, vibrant downtown for all. DSA has three ambassador teams:

- Clean Team
- Community Safety & Hospitality Team
- Public Realm Operations Team

Our trajectory with SPR began in 2015 with a pilot project, turned into a 5-year agreement, added extensions through the pandemic, and is currently in six-year agreement which had some notable adds.

Can't do our work without partners, including our core funders FOWS, Alliance, SPF (not a current partner, but got us started with a five-year funding commitment), and community groups such as Friends of Occidental Park, Belltown United, Friends of the Waterfront, etc. We enjoy big ratepayer support, and always keep those groups in the loop.

Here are the things we work on in the parks: daily amenities, activations, series programming, permitted events, and special events. We support over 10,000 hours of activation in our parks per year; we have a great data team and share data from our events with SPR on a quarterly basis.

Our impact is felt in a strong improvement in perceptions of the parks being clean, safe and welcoming places, especially prior to the pandemic. We have also been smart in leveraging public dollars; since 2016 every \$1 of SPR funding leveraged an additional \$6.67 in private funding – higher than the 3:1 contract requirement with SPR.

Highlighting some lessons learned. What works well:

- Layers of activation
- Wide variety (on repeat)
- Community input
- Communication
- Plan, execute, analyze
- Follow the data
- Flexibility

And some challenges:

- Poor planning
- Low stakeholder buy-in
- Too much, too fast
- Misaligned to park personality

Harrang pauses for questions from BPRC members.

Chisholm Clare asks how DSA markets events. Harrang notes that communication has shifted; Facebook was useful 5 years ago but is no longer useful. Current methods include social media, targeted ads, physical signs, community signboards, and community email groups.

Flinn asks if DSA has the proper support from SPR to accomplish its mission. Harrang notes that DSA rarely asks SPR for approval of events but updates the department quarterly; SPR also provides maintenance following events.

Seattle Waterfront Update

Tiffani Melake, Waterfront Operations Manager (Seattle Center), delivers the presentation.

Melake shares an image of the Waterfront Park Boulevard to orient the discussion for the Board.

Since 2023, Seattle Center has been operating at Waterfront Park. Key to this work is our partnership with non-profit Friends of Waterfront Park. We also have a dedicated, specialized City maintenance team from Seattle Center. We provide free public programming and events year-round, as well as public safety and outreach services. We also have an Oversight Committee to ensure accountability and reporting to the Mayor and City Council.

Seattle Center currently has a 6-year operating agreement through 2028. This agreement aligns with Seattle Park District funding cycle and a Memorandum of Agreement between SPR and Seattle Center. This agreement integrates a robust performance standard and is reviewed with the Central Waterfront Oversight Committee.

SPR is critical to our success; the Metropolitan Park District provides \$3.5M in annual funding through 2028, escalated at 4% annually from 2023 on. We really appreciate SPR's support!

Our operations team began in 2023; we have 17 Operations team staff members dedicated to daily maintenance and landscaping of Waterfront Park. This team conducts park inspections, removes graffiti, and in 2024 completed over 300 work orders (on top of daily routine maintenance).

The Waterfront also has our own Emergency Safety Unit (ESU), which is 21 public safety officers, much like park rangers. These officers are onsite 24/7 and carry pepper spray and Narcan. The Waterfront has a unique set of park rules developed in 2022, which resemble SPR park rules but are tailored specifically to the location. In 2024, the ESU had nearly 25,000 interactions; the top interaction types included drug and alcohol use, smoking, camping attempts, and welfare checks.

Diaz thanks Melake for the presentation.

Seattle Parks & Recreation: Acquisitions 101

Lise Ward, Property Management Interagency Advisor, delivers the presentation.

Seattle's park acquisitions started in 1884 with the first park, Denny Park, which we are currently sitting in! I'm going to talk about our more recent acquisitions programs.

Since 1990, we have acquired over 800 acres, building relationships with funders and landowners. We have four historic acquisitions programs:

- Open Space & Trails (1990-1998)
 - \$100m funding
 - Preserved 600 acres
 - Focus: Greenbelts, natural areas, trails
- Pro Parks Levy (2000-2008)
 - \$33m funding
 - 43 acres acquired
 - Focus: Neighborhood parks, green spaces
- Parks & Green Spaces Levy (2008-2014)
 - Nearly \$20m leveraged funds
 - 75 acres acquired
 - Focus: Neighborhood Parks, green spaces
- Positive leverage (2014-Present Day)

Positive Leverage here means using other people's money to increase the return on your investment. When you get a mortgage, your down payment is the leverage to the bank's money. For parks, this is usually grants or low interest loans or things that allow us to do more than our capacity would allow.

We look to acquire park property for neighborhood parks in parcels of 10,000 square feet or larger in gap areas. Our focus is on need, equity, and opportunity. Creative partnerships and ROW use can help to offset high prices. Other criteria include urban village location, flat terrain, sun orientation, willing sellers, and minimal development and relocation costs.

Ward provides case studies: Cheryl Chow Park, and 17th and Walker. The latter property filled two existing park service gaps as defined in 2024 Parks and Open Space Plan.

SPR also focuses on green space planning through acquisitions. This is a voluntary acquisition program and seeks to preserve habitat and natural buffers. There are 30+ designated green spaces in Seattle; SPR has blanket authority to acquire land within established Green Spaces.

Ward provides case studies: Thornton Creek, and Lake City Floodplain Park.

Ward pauses for questions from the Board.

Flinn notes the historically decreasing funding allocations since 1989/90 and asks how the program is currently funded. Ward provides a multifaceted explanation of tools and funding sources used by SPR, including King County and WA state grants.

Old & New Business

There being no further business, Nakamura adjourns the meeting at 7:41 PM.