

# Seattle Park District Updates

## Item 1: Background on the Seattle Park District

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Park District Board Meeting | June 24, 2024



**Seattle**  
Parks & Recreation

Healthy People, Thriving Environment, Vibrant Community

#SeattleShines



# Background: Seattle Park District

## Original intent of the Park District (*Parks Legacy Committee 2013-2014*)

- ✓ Support core parks and recreation services during an era of General Fund contraction
- ✓ Addressing a major maintenance backlog
- ✓ Better serve the needs of a rapidly growing Seattle with changing demographics

## Key Facts:

- An independent taxing authority, with borders matching the City of Seattle, established in a 2014 vote
- Resources are legally restricted to supporting parks and recreation purposes
- Financial and programmatic planning occurs in 6-year Cycles
  - Cycle 1 ran from 2015-2020, making significant investments in major maintenance, day-to-day maintenance of parks and facilities, expanding access to recreation programs, and acquiring and developing new parks.
  - 2-year “interim period” during the pandemic, and Cycle 2 (2023-2028) was adopted in November 2022.



# Background: Park District Governance



## City Council

*Sets funding levels and broad policy direction and provides oversight for SPR*

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## Mayor

*Appoints department leadership and provides more specific leadership*

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## Seattle Parks & Recreation

*Operates parks and recreation facilities for the residents of Seattle*

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## Park District Board

*Governs the independent taxing authority, the Seattle Park District, made up of ex-officio City Council-members*

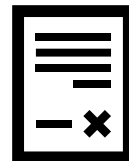
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## Board of Parks & Recreation Commissioners

*Advisory and oversight board made up of appointed Seattle residents*

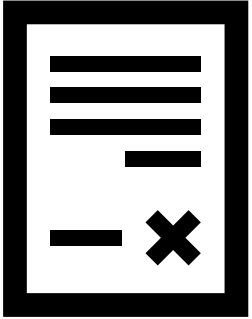
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## Interlocal Agreement

*Governs the relationship between the City of Seattle and the Seattle Park District, laying out roles and accountability provisions.*

# Background: Interlocal Agreement

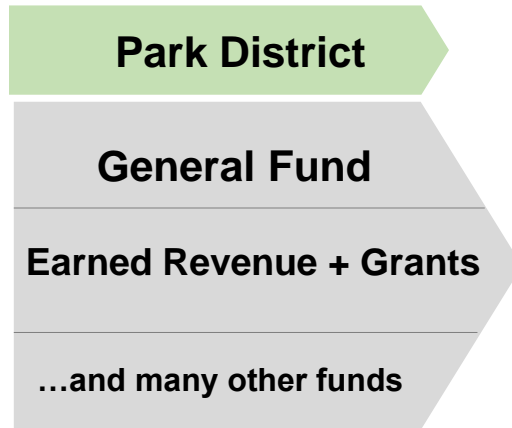


- ***The Park District*** levies property taxes and sets a budget for use of those funds to support parks and recreation services within its jurisdiction
- ***The City*** owns, maintains, operates, and staffs all parks and recreation facilities, using Park District and other funds to do so
- ***Planning*** occurs in 6-year cycles, with roles for SPR, the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners (BPRC), and the Mayor, with a final plan adopted by the Park District Board
- Sets a minimum ***General Fund*** contribution by the City to SPR



# Background: Braided Funding & Impacts

*SPR's budget is made up of various funding sources...*



*...that support SPR's operations...*

## **SPR's Lines of Business:**

- Activation
- Facility Maintenance
- Grounds Maintenance
- Capital Development
- Urban Forestry
- ...and many more

*...resulting in benefits to the public, verified by performance measures...*

**# of facilities decarbonized**  
**# of youth employed**  
**# beach rescues**  
**% of parks meeting maintenance standards**  
**...and many more**

## **The Park District represents 37% of SPR's total 2024 Adopted Budget:**

- Braided with other funds throughout our operations—generally no “Park District activities” that are separate from SPR's “General Fund activities.”
- Provides essential support to basic park maintenance, recreation facilities, Capital Improvement Program (CIP), and more; program goals and service levels are based on use of all funds.

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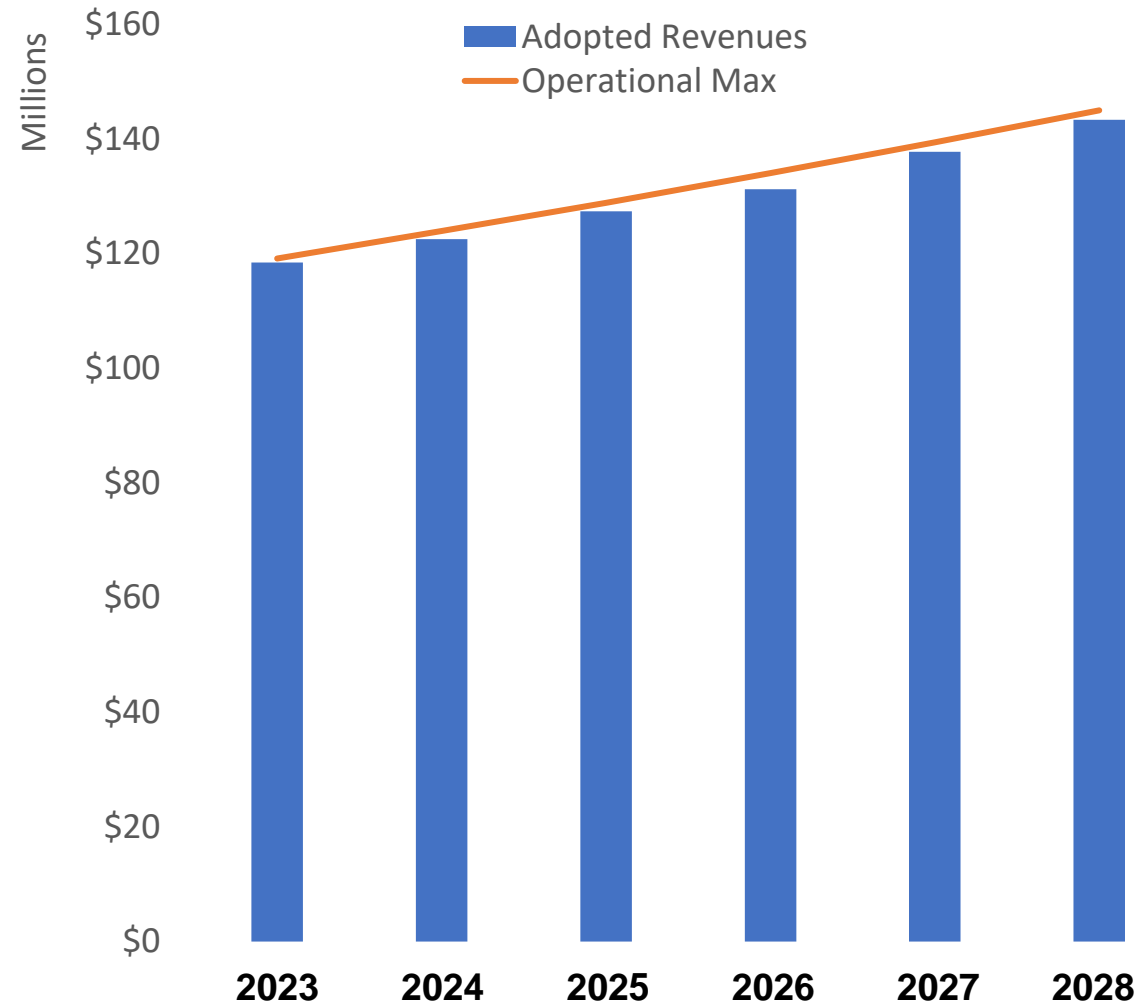
Park District  
Board vote

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2019	2020	2021	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	2023
			2022												

# Background: Cycle 2 Financial Assumptions

- Cycle 2 is a 6-year financial plan, spanning 2023-2028, setting the revenue maximum and allocating funds by *lines of business*.
- SPR, CBO, and Council Central Staff developed an “operational maximum” for Cycle 2 revenues to avoid risk. Then, we built the 6-year financial plan (and the line of business allocations) to stay within that maximum.
- Revenues increase 4% annually to account for inflation.



# Background: Examples of Cycle 2 Investments



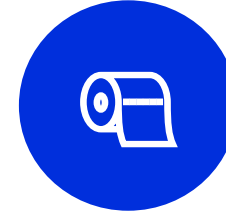
Increase evening and weekend **park maintenance**



Reboot and expand the **Park Ranger** program



Expand **Center City Activation** through the Park Concierge Program and strengthened community partnerships



Expand access and cleanliness of **park restrooms**



Expand **Community Center** operating hours



Launch an **Equitable Park Development Fund** to support community-driven park improvement projects



Preserve the urban canopy through investment in the **Green Seattle Partnership** and a new **Trees in Developed Parks** program



Bolster support for **preventative maintenance** for regulatory and life/safety compliance



Deepen our investment in **youth employment**, transitioning from stipend to wage-based



Launch a dedicated **Vandalism Response Team**



# Background: Accountability & Oversight in Cycle 2

The Seattle Park District's investment in parks and recreation services deserves a high degree of performance oversight and accountability.



Seattle Park District  
Cycle 2 Ramp Up & Reporting Plan

March 31, 2023

- ✓ **Park District Board Resolution 51** outlined specific reporting requirements, and directed SPR to develop a **Cycle 2 Reporting Plan** that sets performance measures for all parts of the organization
- ✓ **SPR** provides the public updates on accomplishments using:
  - Online **financial and performance dashboards** which report KPIs on a twice-annual basis
  - Continuing from Cycle 1, **annual reports** provide updates on year-to-year accomplishments, a **mid-cycle evaluation** (2026) will identify lessons learned to inform the next planning cycle, and a **cycle 2-end report** (2029) will provide a summative assessment
- ✓ **BPRC Performance Oversight Subcommittee** tracks SPR performance against Cycle 2 commitments, and will co-design the mid-cycle evaluation
- ✓ **City Auditor** conducts independent analyses and develops recommendations (per MPD Board request; began in June)

# Background: Annual Park District Board Meetings

Meeting	Purpose & Topics
<i>June</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Review of prior year financial and operational performance</li><li>✓ Review of any appropriate legislation</li></ul>
<i>October</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Presentation and public hearing on Proposed Park District Budget for the following year</li></ul>
<i>November</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Adoption of the Park District Budget for the following year and related legislation – including setting the tax rate for the following year</li></ul>

## Key Context:

- Primary oversight of broader SPR functions by the Seattle City Council occurs in the Parks, Public Utilities, & Technology Committee
- Given the braided nature of SPR's funding, the Park District budget process is aligned with the broader City budget process

# Thank you!



Healthy People, Thriving Environment, Vibrant Community

