



MEMORANDUM

Date: March 9, 2015

To: Board of Park Commissioners

From: Tom Hauger, Department of Planning and Development
Susanne Rockwell, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Subject: Seattle Comprehensive Plan and Parks Element

Requested Board Action

The Board is requested to review and comment on the proposed new 'Parks and Open Space Element' in the City's Comprehensive Plan.

This is a follow-up conversation to two previous discussions with the Board, including the January meeting in which members of the Seattle Planning Commission participated.

Staff Recommendation:

Add a new Parks and Open Space Element into the Comprehensive Plan to provide long-term guidance about how the City will meet the open space needs of a growing population.

Policy Description and Background

The Comprehensive Plan is a policy document that guides how the City will accommodate the population and job growth that is expected to occur over the next 20 years (70,000 housing units and 115,000 jobs). The Comp Plan was first adopted in 1994. Because open space is so important to the quality of life in an urban element, we are proposing to add a new Parks and Open Space Element to the Plan as part of the update.

At the January meeting, Board members and Planning Commissioners suggested topics and directions that could be included with the proposed policies. The revised draft of the Element highlights areas where we have incorporated those ideas. Citywide equity statements will be incorporated by second quarter. A draft document is attached.

Highlights of the Revised Parks Element

Changes and additions include:

- Added "Recreation" to the title
- In the Distribution section, added policy that calls for efficient use of space by including a variety of activities

- Added need to consider access when acquiring or improving parks
- Added policy addressing trails as both recreation opportunities and access to park facilities
- More explicitly calls for partnerships that address race and social justice
- Calls for use of innovative maintenance techniques that can improve environmental sustainability
- Added look for ways to reduce utility use in parks
- Added restore forests on City-owned land and use education programs and wildlife management to improve wildlife habitat in the city.
- Added clean up and provide access to currently contaminated sites.

Key Policy Issues:

1. *Do the policies in the proposed Element represent the City’s goals for the future of open space in the city? Is anything missing? Do the policies capture the directions the City wants to pursue?*
2. The proposed Element includes a table, below, showing open space goals for the different types of urban villages. This chart is currently in the Plan’s appendix. Department of Planning and Development (DPD) and Parks staff are in the process of analyzing open space distribution options and may have recommendations on modifications to this in second quarter. *(Note: Please see the attached Open Space Comparison paper for additional data.)*

Is there a better way to describe how the City wants parks and open space to change with a growing population?

Urban Center	Hub Urban Village	Residential Urban Village
1 acre of open space per 1,000 households and 1 acre per 10,000 employees	1 acre of open space per 1,000 households	1 acre of open space per 1,000 households
All locations in center within 1/8 mile of open space at least 10,000 square feet in area	All locations in village within 1/8 mile of open space at least 10,000 square feet in area	
1 usable open space of at least 1 acre per 2,500 households; 1 indoor, multi-use recreation facility per urban center; 1 community garden per 2,500 households	1 usable open space of at least 1 acre; 1 indoor facility for public assembly; 1 community garden per 2,500 households	1 usable open space of at least 1 acre where residential density is 10 households per gross acre; 1 facility for indoor public assembly; 1 community garden per 2,500 households

Comp Plan Process

DPD has been conducting extensive outreach on the update to the Comp Plan since 2013. We have been calling this effort Seattle 2035. The schedule is:

May 2015 – publish Draft EIS on Seattle 2035

July 2015 – publish Draft Seattle 2035 Plan

December 2015 – publish Final EIS and Mayor’s Recommended Plan for Seattle 2035

Early 2016 – Council action on Seattle 2035

Additional Information

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Attachments

1. Parks and Recreation Appendix
2. Seattle Parks Equity Statement - draft
3. Current Open Space Standards - Comparison

Website

2035.seattle.gov