



## MEMORANDUM

Date: 11/05/2014  
To: Board of Park Commissioners  
From: Susanne Rockwell  
Subject: Parks Classification Policy Update

### **Requested Board Action**

Recommend to the Superintendent adoption of the updated Park Classification System Policy.

### **Staff Recommendation:**

Approve the updated Park Classification System Policy (Policy 060 P5.11.1), to better align with the Parks Legacy Plan, use definitions and inclusion of property acquired since the Policy was adopted in 2009.

Proposed classification categories to replace the existing system are as follows:

#### **Existing Categories**

1. Triangles/Circles/Square
2. Pocket Park
3. Neighborhood Park
4. Community Park
5. Downtown Park
6. Recreation Area
7. Natural Area/Greenbelt
8. Boulevards/Green Streets/Trails
9. Special Use Park

#### **Proposed Categories**

1. Mini Parks/Pocket Parks
2. Neighborhood Parks
3. Community Parks
4. Downtown Parks
5. Regional Parks
6. Special-Use Parks/Specialty Gardens
7. Greenbelts/Natural Areas
8. Boulevards/Green Streets/Greenways

### **Policy Description and Background** (please see attached spreadsheet and redlined policy for more detail)

The purpose of the Park Classification System Policy is to establish a method for classifying the parks in Seattle Parks and Recreation. The categories are driven by park use, purpose, general size, attributes, natural assets, and physical environment. The system provides a general guideline for development options through the desired and optional assets and programmatic opportunities associated with each category.

During the development of the Parks Legacy Plan, Parks determined that some of the parks classifications did not work well for planning and analysis purposes. The categories and parks assigned to them were modified during the plan's development but the Parks Classification Policy was not updated. The proposed changes reflect the consolidation or expansion of certain categories with the park properties as appropriate. Additionally,

the park classification categories are also used for reporting purposes in other City policy documents, such as the Comprehensive Plan and in reports generated by the Trust for Public Land.

**Key Policy Issues:** WHATS NEW/DIFFERENT/CHANGED (please refer to the attached spreadsheet for specific details)

1. The 'Triangles/Circles/Squares' and 'Pocket Park' categories have been consolidated into the new category of 'Mini Parks/Pocket Parks' to reduce the number of categories.
2. Key elements of the Recreation area classification can be found in 'Neighborhood Parks', 'Community Parks' and 'Regional Parks' categories; as a result 'Recreation Area' as a distinct category has been eliminated in the proposed policy and recreation elements have been added into the optional assets section for the Neighborhood, Community and Regional Parks categories.
3. The creation of a new 'Regional Parks' category captures some of Parks' largest landholdings, often serving broader citywide recreation needs. Many of these parks have historic or landmarked significance and/or large natural areas of undeveloped land. These parks tend to be destinations, often generate tourism, and have views or water access. Examples include: Gas Works Park, Discovery Park, Warren G. Magnuson Park, Lincoln Park and Green Lake Park. Parks with the attributes described above were reclassified from 'Community Park', 'Downtown Park', 'Natural Area', 'Recreation Area', and 'Special Use' categories.
4. The properties listed in the City's 1993 Greenspaces Policy (Resolution 28653) remain in the 'Greenbelts/Natural Area' category, along with an additional 17 new properties. While the 'Greenbelts/Natural Area' definition has not changed from the 2009 Parks Classification Policy, 14 properties were reclassified from Greenbelts to other categories better align their uses and attributes:
  1. 3001 E Madison - Mini Parks/Pocket Parks
  2. Bellevue Place – Boulevards/Green Streets/Greenways
  3. Camp Long - Special-Use Parks/Specialty Gardens
  4. Carkeek Park - Community Parks
  5. Crown Hill Glen - Mini Parks/Pocket Parks
  6. Discovery Park - Regional Parks
  7. Golden Gardens Park - Regional Parks
  8. Hamilton Viewpoint Park - Neighborhood Parks
  9. Madrona Park - Community Parks
  10. Seward Park - Regional Parks
  11. Sunset Place - Mini Parks/Pocket Parks
  12. Taejon Park – Neighborhood Parks
  13. Washington Park and Arboretum - Special-Use Parks/Specialty Gardens
  14. Westcrest Park - Community Parks
5. 'Special-Use Parks' category has been expanded to include 'Specialty Gardens'. This category refers generally to stand-alone parks that are designed to serve one particular use. Examples include: Camp Long, Woodland Park Zoo, West Seattle Stadium, and Kubota Gardens.

**Public involvement process**

As the proposed changes are not extensive and the use of this policy is primarily for planning and administrative purposes we have not planned an extensive public involvement process. We will provide a four-week comment period and a public hearing before the Board of Park Commissioners makes its recommendation.

The tentative schedule is as follows:

- November 13 – Park Board briefing
- December 9 - Deadline for written comments
- December 11 - Park Board public hearing, discussion and possible vote
- Mid-December - Parks Superintendent makes decision on proposed policy changes

**Additional Information**

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**Attachments**

Park Classification Policy showing proposed changes (Policy 060-P 5.11.1)

Spreadsheet showing park classifications

**Website**

[http://www.seattle.gov/parks/Publications/policy/parks\\_classification\\_policy.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/parks/Publications/policy/parks_classification_policy.pdf)