

Glossary of Assessment Criteria Terms

A. Legacy Plan Outcomes

1. Healthy People

Physical activity reduces obesity and produces important psychological benefits, relieving symptoms of depression and anxiety, and enhancing psychological well-being. Park-like settings are associated with feelings of peacefulness, tranquility and relaxation; and with enhanced mental attention and performance. (PLP page xiii)

a. Physical Health and Well-being

An Investment Initiative contributes to Physical Health and Well-being if it:

- Promotes physical activity, and/or
- Contributes to green, park spaces. (PLP page xiii-xiv)

2. Healthy Environment

The natural environment encompasses all living and non-living things occurring naturally on earth. Water (oceans, rivers, lakes and ponds), geology, air/atmosphere, and life make up the elements of the natural environment.

a. Environmental/Climate Change Benefits

[Note: After researching definitions of climate change and environmental sustainability, staff concluded, for the sole purpose of operationalizing the Assessment Criteria, the two are so related as to mean the same thing. Sustaining a healthy environment decreases climate change; and there are climate change benefits from environmental sustainability. An example is the conversion of a land banked site, currently paved or developed, into a park. There will be climate change benefits from increased carbon sequestration from the new plantings, and there will be environmental sustainability benefits from natural drainage and increased wildlife habitat.]

Climate encompasses temperature, humidity, atmospheric pressure, wind, rainfall, and other elements of the atmosphere in a given region over a period of time (weather is these same elements over a shorter period of time, generally up to two weeks). Climate change is a significant and lasting change in the statistical distribution of weather patterns over periods ranging from decades to millions of years. It may be a change in average weather conditions, or in the distribution of

weather around the average conditions; for example, more or fewer extreme weather events.

Environmental changes occur from modern influences, such as growth and development, loss of tree canopy, increased temperatures due to urban heat island effect, and pollution. (PLP page xv-xvii).

An Investment Initiative receives points for this criterion if it reduces the impacts of environmental and climate change by reducing:

- Waste production,
- Water pollution,
- Air pollution, and
- Loss of biodiversity (resulting from the introduction of invasive species and species extinction and the removal of habitat).

b. Environmental Sustainability

The natural environment consists of water, air, geology and life. Sustainability is the capacity to endure. An Investment Initiative contributes to Environmental Sustainability if it helps the element(s) of the environment endure without degradation, meaning it would reduce:

- Waste production,
- Water pollution,
- Air pollution, and
- Loss of biodiversity (resulting from the introduction of invasive species and species extinction and the removal of habitat).

3. Sustainability

Sustainability is the capacity to endure. For the environment, the word describes how biological systems remain diverse and productive over time. For the economy, financial sustainability is the absence of fluctuations over time.

a. Financial Sustainability

The Legacy Plan defines Financial Sustainability with the benefits Parks and Recreation brings to the City: increasing property values, generating tourist revenue, and the direct use value to citizens from using parks and recreation services. (PLP page xviii)

For the Investment Initiative assessment, the capacity to endure applies to Parks budget. An Initiative receives scores for financial sustainability if it:

- Contributes to long-term financial strength of the department;
- Leverages funding from outside sources that will reduce Parks budget obligations while providing services to the public.

b. Beneficial Partnerships

A partnership is an arrangement in which parties agree to cooperate to advance their mutual interests. An Investment Initiative which includes a partner with a mission compatible with Parks, and/or leverages resources to provide park and recreation services for the public would score for this criterion.

4. Strong Community

Strong Communities have the attributes described in a. Neighborhood/Community Strength: gathering places, safety, volunteers and partnerships (PLP page xviii):

a. Neighborhood/Community Strength

An Investment Initiative contributes to Overall Neighborhood or Community strength if it:

- Builds community by providing gathering places where neighbors meet, get to know one another and build relationships,
- Increases public safety,
- Promotes volunteerism,
- Develop and/or leverages partnership resources.

B. Fair and Equitable Access

Fair and equitable access means meeting the needs of people – from all walks of life and all backgrounds, now and in the decades to come. (PLP page iii)

a. Basic Service

For the purposes of evaluating Investment Initiatives, the Basic Services analysis in the Parks Legacy Plan (PLP pages 33-36) ranks programs based on a continuum of the benefit they provide to the community, from mostly community benefit to mostly individual benefit. The more community benefit provided, the more basic is the Initiative.

b. Unique Service

Unique means a program or service where Seattle Parks and Recreation is the only one who can or is providing the program or service.

C. Best Management Practices

BMP's are clear, concise directions for program management, resulting in consistent management across geographic and jurisdictional boundaries. BMP's can be specific to Seattle Parks and Recreation (for example, we have developed our own BMP's for irrigation combining our system needs, climate and industry standards); or they can be rules that are developed by outside institutions (for example, the 1 staff to 20 children ratio for children's programs).

An Initiative receives scores for this criterion if there are known BMP's for the program and it is consistent with them. For example, the accepted standard for tree care is management of a tree once every seven years; if an Initiative moves us closer to that standard it is directly consistent with Best Management Practices.

D. Innovative

Innovative Initiatives are those that are new or inventive approaches. For example, the Homeless Life Skills Job Training with Human Services Agencies (#33) is a new approach to increase park safety.

E. Future Needs/Demands

Future need and demand is identified in the Legacy Plan through analysis of 2010 census data and recreation trends. An Investment Initiative addresses anticipated future needs/demands if it addresses the census and recreation trends identified in the Legacy Plan, including:

- Expected continued increase in overall population, adding an estimated 169,000 people by 2040;
- Large increases in Seattle's population of color from 2000-2010;
- Projected increase in senior population, growing from 11% of the population in 2010, to an estimated 20% in 2040;
- Projected increase in the proportion of households in lower and middle incomes;
- The recreation trend to increased field demand based on increased demand from emerging sports;
- Walking and running are the highest participation activities in some studies; picnicking is highest in others (with walking second).

F. Other

The Other criterion is a measure of the intangible elements of a project or service that may not be adequately gauged in the criteria. For example, Initiative #16, “Develop and Operate a New Outdoor Pool in North Rainier Valley or North Beacon Hill” fills a swimming pool gap, and serves a community with high populations of immigrants and refugees – considerations that may not be reflected in the other Assessment Criteria.