



December 5, 2013

To: Sally Bagshaw, City Councilmember

From: Christopher Williams, Acting Superintendent

**Re: Superintendent's Report to the Parks and Neighborhoods Committee**

**Parks Legacy Plan.** We continue to conduct outreach and gather input on the Parks Legacy Plan. At the Parks Legacy Citizens Advisory Committee public hearing on Nov. 7, 85 people signed up to speak. Another 525 people have given written or spoken input at the regular Committee meetings. Seattle Parks also received 127 comment cards from individuals representing historically underrepresented communities, and our Change Team met with 16 different groups at locations of their choice, reaching an additional 280 individuals. (Most who testified at the public hearing also submitted written comments, some more than once. Some individuals addressed more than one topic.) The Committee will meet on Nov. 21 to discuss the prioritized list of investment initiatives. They will release their preliminary report in mid-December, and host a series of open houses in late January.

**Downtown support.** To prepare to merge downtown park programming and maintenance under a single manager next year, Seattle Parks hosted a series of employee focus groups to discuss observations, feedback and new ideas about our ongoing three-part strategy to keep downtown parks clean, welcoming and safe. Downtown maintenance crew, park concierges and park rangers participated. In focus groups, crew members and managers discussed strategies to deal with downtown parks' issues.

Contractors are busy installing holiday lights in the trees at Westlake Park and Occidental Square.

**Baker Park addition.** Seattle Parks has purchased a 9,900-sq.-ft. addition to the existing 17,820-sq.-ft. Baker Park. Set back from busy NW 85th St., between 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Ave. NW, the existing park is shady, and its reduced visibility has attracted inappropriate activities. Having championed this acquisition for many years, the community successfully applied for Opportunity Fund money to acquire the property. After Seattle Parks had been negotiating for some time with the family who owned it, the family instead sold the property to a builder who planned two houses on the site. Fortunately, we were able to negotiate the acquisition from the builder before it was too late. The addition will add light and additional frontage on 14<sup>th</sup> Ave. NW (after removal of the existing structure), and will provide opportunities for enhanced design and programming to showcase this jewel of a

park. Up to half of the purchase price may be reimbursed by a King County Conservation Futures grant.

**Discovery Park North Parking Lot Renovation.** We have completed the water line replacement that is the first phase of this renovation project, daylighting 400 feet of Scheuerman Creek. Major planting parties took place on four consecutive weekends. The new creek basin, waterfalls and rain gardens look as though they have always been there! Construction on the second phase, which includes resurfacing the parking lot, will begin next spring.



**Building 30 at Magnuson Park.** We held Building 30's dedication on Oct. 11. Julianna Ross from Sand Point Arts and Cultural Exchange (SPACE) moderated and helped plan the event. Those who attended toured the renovated building and enjoyed live music from local band Off the Hook, performances from Thistle Theatre and Seattle Musical Theatre, and demonstrations by OneWorld Roller Derby. The renovated Officers Club on the building's west side was a big hit, and during the event our Special Events staff talked with many potential renters.



On Nov. 8, artists began moving into Building 30's studios. Staff processed 33 contracts, signed out keys, deposited money. The waiting list is steadily growing as more and more people are becoming aware of Magnuson as a new arts hub. On Nov. 16, SPACE held a fundraiser for the arts in the newly opened Officers Club, Magnuson Park's newest and most elegant rental space.

**Maple Leaf celebration and art dedication.** Seattle Parks hosted a celebration of the newly completed \$5 million Maple Leaf Reservoir Park project. The celebration included the dedication of Patrick Marold's site-specific artwork, *Confluent Boulders*.

The park's upper area contains a series of rain gardens, a shelter, a gathering plaza and a viewpoint for Mount Rainier and Lake Washington. The park's sport court area comprises a pickleball court, a hitting wall and basketball hoops. Pathways weave through plantings and trees. Two staircases connect the upper and lower levels of the park. The lower level includes a children's play area (completed last spring) and two ballfields (expected to be ready for use next spring).

**Rainier Beach Community Center and Pool grand opening.** On Sep. 22, Seattle Parks hosted a large community event at the grand opening of Rainier Beach Community Center and Pool. An estimated 1,800 community members turned out, and in three hours we took in \$6,700 for classes and facility rentals. Local performers entertained, local restaurants served food, and the local service providers that will be offering programs at the new facility (Atlantic Street Center, Bike Works, Southeast Seattle Youth Orchestra, and East African Community Services) introduced themselves. Community leaders worked with us since May to plan and implement the grand opening: it was truly a community-driven event.

A few building issues emerged during the first week of operation, and the pool had to close for three days while the mechanical contractor installed a new system for the showers. We opened the pool on a "rolling schedule" to allow staff to learn the new systems and complete essential training.

**Jackson Park Perimeter Trail.** Seattle Parks and Seattle Office of Arts and Culture dedicated Celeste Cooning's sculpture and celebrated the trail's completion. A portion of the trail crosses Thornton Creek and abuts the Licorice Fern Natural Area, which is gradually being restored to native vegetation. The 2.25-mile trail, opened last Feb., is already very popular with walkers, runners, and neighbors.



**Magnolia Boulevard project.** Seattle Parks' Urban Forestry Unit worked with the northwest crew on a Magnolia Boulevard cleanup. This project advanced the goals of the 1998 Magnolia Boulevard Vegetation Management Plan, which seeks to create or maintain expansive views of Puget Sound, maintain the historical levels of madronas on the Boulevard over the long-term, and examine the role that vegetation plays in slope stability and erosion control.

Among the many thank-you notes we received from neighbors, one said "*You and your crew worked well beyond our expectation; and we appreciate the collaborative approach you used in deciding the best solution to specific areas. Members of your crew were friendly and it was obvious that they take pride in seeing the results of their work.*"

**Magnuson Community Center serving transitional housing families.** More than 20 youth from Brettler Family Place participated in Magnuson's weekly After School Special for kids ages 6 to 10 on Oct. 1. This new free weekly program offers

a different activity each week. At its first Big Kid Toys Gym time, kids got to jump in the inflatable, ride scooters and turtles, jump on hop balls, and try their balance on pogo sticks and stilts.

**Lifelong Recreation Parkinson's Tandem Biking Program.** This partnership between the UW, Outdoors for All, and Lifelong Recreation has expanded into two classes that meet three times each week. This will accommodate nine Parkinson's "stokers" and about 20 volunteer "captains." The program has also served to introduce participants to other Lifelong Recreation programs; several participants have gone on to register for other classes and trips. As a result of the Parkinson's Program we are now collaborating with UW Physical Therapy student to develop a fitness program: the students gain a real-world environment in which to practice what they are learning, and we gain introductions to the network of physical therapists who work with this group, as possible referrals for seniors whose physicians encourage them to participate in regular exercise programs. This could greatly expand our fitness programs.

**Van Asselt Community Center.** Sponsored by the Somali Task Force and Seattle Parks, a celebration of Eid al-Adha, one of the most important festivals in the Muslim calendar, drew over 200 participants to Van Asselt Community Center on Oct. 26. Youth, parents and other community members helped us host an afternoon of activities and education about the Affordable Care Act, resources for families, and family and community violence prevention strategies. Somali television was present to report on the Somali Task Force EID and community education event.

**Week Without Violence.** Seattle Parks' Week Without Violence in November began with a preview of Lee Daniels' film *The Butler* and a swim at the new Rainier Beach Pool: over 50 teens from across the city took part in free swim and water-safety education activities designed for all levels of swimming skill. The week ended with Teen Service Awards and a Peace on the Beach event at Golden Gardens.

**Carkeek Park salmon run.** A large number of adult chum salmon heading upstream in Pipers Creek has brought a large number of park visitors wanting to observe the salmon homecoming. To celebrate the salmon return, Seattle Public Utilities will host a Nov. 29 event with free activities, food, music and educational information. Pipers Creek is one of Seattle's best places to see salmon from now until early December.