

Seattle Parks and Recreation  
Viewpoint Advisory Team  
Meeting minutes

October 24, 2018

Viewpoint Advisory Team  
Seattle Parks and Recreation Administration Building  
Park Board Room  
100 Dexter Ave. N, Seattle  
6:00 pm- 8:30 pm

<b>Members:</b>	<b>Present (bold)</b>	<i>Absent (italic)</i>
	<b>Michael Austin</b>	<b>William Lowe</b>
	<i>Weston Brinkley</i>	<b>Joanna Nelson de Flores</b>
	<i>Suzie Burke (invited)</i>	<i>Laila Pajimula</i>
	<i>Bruce Carter</i>	<i>Dorian Savon Magee-Petty</i>
	<b>Karen Daubert</b>	

6:00 pm Call to order

Introductions

**Kathy Nyland, SPR, Facilitator**

Tonight is the fourth meeting of the Viewpoint Advisory Team. The goal is that at the end of tonight's meeting, you'll have a set of recommendations that will be written up and then presented to the Superintendent of SPR. The last meeting was especially productive with an abundance of ideas floated and various themes emerged. Some material was generated for this meeting that captured those discussions and presented in a format that could help start your dialogue as you move from ideas to recommendations.

Though Weston could not be here this evening, he did provide comments and suggested edits to the document. Michael also added comments to the document. Print outs of those track changes were distributed.

Over the course of a few meetings, a lot of material was covered- the history, capacity issues, allocation of resources, the present-day conditions of the viewpoints, as well as new standards. You've been engaged as you've taken this in and contemplated the work at hand.

Minutes for the October 10 meeting were presented. Group approved as is.

Because a running theme throughout this process has been centered around budget, our next speaker is here to discuss something that Interim Superintendent Christopher Williams mentioned in his opening remarks on September 12, and that is the Legacy Strategic Plan (Levy).

**Kathleen Conner, SPR, Strategic Advisor:** Kathleen is leading the development of SPR's Strategic Plan and next year that will include the initiatives and financial plan. The Strategic Plan is a high-level roadmap and the idea is that it will have SPR's vision, mission and values identified. Those exist in 2014 Legacy plan and those serve as the anchors. We'll then have goals and strategies to achieve the

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vision. It's an overarching plan for the entire department. One of the main sources of funding is the Park District, but we also have Real Estate Excise Tax (REET), and grants. We'll be planning public engagement, with an emphasis on providing different ways for people to participate and weigh in. One of the requirements of the Park District is to have an interlocal agreement with the State and the Park District Board (which is also the City Council) and we are required to do planning every six years. The plan leads to funding from the Park District. The effort we are launching is for 2021 which is quickly approaching.

Some fun facts that we keep in mind as we plan. The City's Comprehensive Plan projects that Seattle will have 120,000 more people by 2035. In 2016 and 2017, the city's population grew by 51,000. We are well ahead of the projected estimates. Seattle is growing, and demands are increasing. That is what we are planning for- to meet those demands. 94% of the city's housing units are within a half mile of a park. In Urban Villages, we aim to have a park within a five-minute walkshed.

We are looking at many factors as we embark on this planning process. As mentioned, we are crafting a robust outreach and engagement phase which includes conversations with elected official, our Board of Park Commissioners, the Park District Oversight Committee, internal and external stakeholders and our most important client, the public. We're gathering information through various means- utilizing existing data, surveys, demographics, recreation demand, to name just a few. And we're listening to our Task Forces, such as the Viewpoint Advisory Team.

Since this is an update, we are not starting from scratch, but we are trying to be intentional and offer opportunities for those who have not been involved previously. We want to broaden the conversation.

This work falls into two stages- Renewing the Legacy Strategic Plan (Winter 2019-Spring 2019) and then the next Park District Financial Plan Initiatives (Spring 2019- June 2020).

Walked through one tool that SPR will be utilizing- the Racial and Social Equity Index map. This is a tool to aid in the identification of city planning, programming and investment priorities.

As far as the schedule for the Strategic Plan, we're currently doing the internal review now. The external review will begin in 2019. The second phase is the Financial Plan which is where we come up with the initiatives. Two thirds of our Park District funding (\$50M) is currently earmarked for "Fix It First", or major maintenance where we address what we have. There was about \$2M for acquisition. Work will wrap up our work in mid-2020 and that will entail presenting to the Park District Board for adoption in June and November, with the second 6-year financial cycle beginning in January 2021.

Q: Was the list of Task Forces on your PPT just examples?

A: SPR has four Task Forces. Public Recreation is aligned with the Associated Recreation Council. We are not meeting regularly. Athletic Fields: We are working with the Sports Advisory Council which is a standing committee. The Olmsted Legacy has been meeting over the last several months. And then there's Viewpoint Advisory Team.

Comment: The Task Forces seem a bit underrepresented, and very recreation focused. Olmsted is more historic. There seems to be lacking amongst some user groups.

Q: Is there discussion for a Task Force that focuses on other needs for parks?

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A: At this point, we are focused on these groups but with outreach, we are looking at focus groups and convening other interests and/or users. We have these specific Task Forces because of the long-standing issues. We are planning to engage other groups like our Boards and Commissions as we expand our outreach efforts. There will be two windows for participation.

Q: Are all funding sources for SPR represented with this Strategic Plan?

A: Yes. This is a vision for entire department.

Q: Is advocacy a piece of this work? And what other themes have come forward in the planning process so far, even in this early stage?

A: We'd welcome any assistance with planning and support. Since outreach hasn't officially started, we've heard a bit. What we have heard though is land acquisition and the desire for more, especially within Urban Villages. Safety is another factor- people wanting to feel safe in our parks.

Comment: Fill void with Task Forces and reiterated the need to use the Racial Equity Index map. There is a disparity with access to high-quality parks and the experience people have is subjective so explore having more racially diverse outreach and engagement. You'll be informing but also need to seek input. Recommend adding Women's Commission to outreach list (safety issues).

A: With Task Forces, SPR did try to diversify membership but knows that work is ongoing.

The majority of time on tonight's agenda is to provide time for your conversation and deliberations. How that conversation proceeds is for you to decide. You were given some documents that could start the discussions- whether you want to word smith or want to write down thoughts on these sheets. It's up to you.

Discussion follows: Focus on sample format distributed.

Agrees with comments provided, incorporating the two points. Likes that the 2005 plan was called out. The introduction of 2005 plan is nice wording and think it's still appropriate for today. Likes the language used about the viewpoints are special places. Not wedded to exact language but likes the tone. As far as goals laid out, thinks we should include those as part of recommendation report.

Clarity: Include goals in recommendation report and the updated VMPs/template.

In relation to letter, focus is based on the scope provided.

First paragraph in introduction, likes the example. Wants to keep brief, succinct. Sample fits on two pages. **ASK:** infuse language from the introduction of the 2005 VMP into introduction of the recommendation letter and include goals to show that there is alignment. Clarify. The 2005 VMP document that is overarching and then we saw examples updated site-specific plans. Template for the site-specific plans. It is up to you to make recommendations; update one or the other, or both. Feel like short, simple, digestible, but they should belong to a larger more comprehensive document. Update 2005 as end-product, plus specifics that are housed together. Overarching plan for Viewpoints then each park has its smaller management recommendations/actions that have priorities for each site and that they are references to the larger specifications, diagrams, and best management practices that are applicable.

Process for timing is needed. We'll have recommendation to update 2005, but between here and there are these items from the parking lot- finalizing criteria for viewpoints, and process for adding and removing designations. Need to determine that sequencing for most useful process.

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Once we have recommendations, we'll examine and analyze the actions and time needed to prepare and complete for sequencing purposes. And then present the recommendations to the Superintendent, showing what is needed to get from A to Z. Present sequencing as part of recommendations.

Advisory Team member arrives. Group provides a briefing about where the group is as far as discussions.

Back on categories (themes), **Resources**, in relation to a comment about post-restoration perpetual maintenance costs, provide comprehensive budget pertaining to all costs associated with viewpoint parks. Something that encompasses everything, have comprehensive statement that is your main bullet and then subcategories include the studies, assessment, restoration, etc. Combine the bullets but emphasizing the need for a comprehensive understanding that shows the continuum. The continuum would cover the phases: planning, restoration, maintenance, establishment/successful establishment, ongoing. All of this would be included under the comprehensive header.

Under **Best management Practices**, recommendation #2, what is 'redefine' view.

Redefining view is based on the conversations the group had about the view. Are we so married to the view that was, or the view that is, that we can't be flexible? One example was around Mt Baker and the trees that are growing and, for some, are part of the view. Is there flexibility around a view or is it something very specific? Maybe 'define' rather than redefine when we update VMP. Are we trying to maintain some historic view, exactly as has always been? Or is there an opportunity to work towards something different? Where is there room to have some trees as part of the view to help stabilize the banks where there are steep slopes. Maybe phrase it so we reference the landscape architect/designer. Creating view where design palette or design guidelines that provide a variety of different concepts that create site-specific experiences that are unique and safe. Emphasize site specific view and specifics should be called out in VMPs.

Discussion: Q: What is a view. What is definition?

Rather than thinking about definition, perhaps approach as 'use'. In previous conversation, there was talk about the use of these parks/sites is the view. If you're looking at flexibility, you could expand the use- view, environmentally sounds practices, and stabilizing slopes. Not redefining view but incorporating some flexibility that has been discussed. View seems to be already defined, declarative, so let's not overprescribe. Maybe rather than redefining, identify there's a management practice that is site-specific. Can we still include trees as a best management practice for stabilizing slopes within viewpoints? Trees can be strategically placed, still meeting goals of viewpoint. Strike first portion of sentence- redefine but include maintenance procedures. Include and design approaches, such as...

Q: Are planting trees recommended in some viewpoints? JJ: Yes. Q: How much definition do we need to have between policy and practice?

Would like to see that trees could be planted, spacing them out. Want to make sure that is called out- safety first, slope stabilization, framed viewpoints. Our view may be different than 20 years ago based on practices, like topping trees. Maintenance procedures and restoration practices. Maintenance and restoration aren't interchangeable. **Suggest-** restoration and maintenance and design approaches- which is upfront, then ongoing.

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**Best Management Practices:** Fourth bullet, change to “existing and projected risks” so it goes beyond the maintenance risks but alludes to climate change challenges.

**Resources:** Are we recommending having staff dedicated solely to viewpoint restoration efforts? If we have comprehensive budget, we have including but not limited to. Have broad and then sub-bullets and include staff. We know we are understaffed. There is more work than SPR has capacity for, so can we leave this open? Let’s lift restrictions and do something so deficit can be reduced. “Provide a comprehensive budget,” including but not limited to...additional staffing. Is it staff? Or contract? Or is it capacity? **Resources, Recommendation 1**, strike ‘about’, and have sub-bullets. Recap continuum, planning, restoration, maintenances, establishment (successful). Include capacity to ensure work gets done.

**Future Considerations: Suggest** “Phase 2” rather than ‘future considerations’ to jump right in and strengthen. Under Recommendation 1, “Develop Phase 2 that adopts designation criteria including ...creating clear process around adding and removing sites. Last bullet under Future Consideration, ‘includes’ social equity rather than ‘have, or ‘prioritize’. Is that future recommendation or present? Should we include that last bullet under resources, consider this under resources. Why listed here is because this process started with parks that were already designated. Phase 2 has more flexibility as far as creating conversation. Can list this bullet several places. Reminder to use the equity index map. Call out in introduction with values/goals and under **Resources** theme. Language should reflect this is an ongoing conversation, and these values should be part of that. Talking about the 16 and trying to reach universal language so that as conversation continues, we won’t have to go through this exercise of formation when we entertain the rest of the city and any and all other viewpoints. Under **Future Considerations**, declare that after Phase 1 we need to go to Phase 2 because it’s a continuing conversation. Future, Recommendation 1, adopt versus examines. Prefers “examine” because this is a high-level assessment and we are not reaching adoption yet. Adoption is too close to implementation. If this is about time and resources, Phase 2 is about criteria, apply criteria to the 16 (feels two could be removed from designation because there’s nothing that could obstruct view from beach). Group okay with examine. As far as ‘social equity’, for city purposes and consistency, ‘racial equity and social justice’ so suggested change there.

Discussion around racial equity. Respective to Comprehensive Plan, city leads with equity and not just equity but addressing racial equity as race is always primary indicator that identifies socio-economic cultural types of disadvantages for communities. The intent is to apply equity analysis to identify communities to address and bring it forward. We lead with race when it comes to identifying and creating objectives that lead to measurable results that support and advancing access to opportunities for everyone. Provide resources to address all the other ‘isms’. Therefore, it is important to use the universal language of racial equity and social justice. Group agreed to being consistent with other city documents.

Other:

Simultaneous or Phased: Prioritize or tier. Tier base on criteria. There are two parks within 16 that are on beaches and do not face obstruction possibilities. Group prefers phased approach.

Prioritize Viewpoints over other parks? Discussion follows. Yes, because they have not been prioritized before. Others recognize the difficulty, but safety is first and foremost. This effort is focused on the 16 so there is a priority already called out. Suggest equity within districts. Some districts may not have

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designated viewpoints but they should still be adequately funded to care for their assets. Priority for now, for a finite period, during restoration and establishment.

We have service levels for our parks and we have not been maintaining viewpoints. If resources were available, we would maintain our viewpoints according to current regulations. Funding package would take care of the viewpoints and get SPR to a place where we can restore and maintain. So we do not prioritize viewpoints at the expense of other parks. We have certain parks that have a high-level of service, like parks with fields. Want to bring our viewpoints up to same level of service, so this 'user group' and use is met. All of our parks have certain standards of service. Viewpoints service have not been meeting those standards. We don't have maintenance standards that we can meet. Complications include climate change, ECAs, urban canopy goals. Want to maintain all of our assets the way they should be, and the way we want to be able to maintain. Need to bring up level of service of our viewpoints to the same level as other parks, we need to increase our prioritization. With this designation comes an expectation. SPR has not met that expectations and they want to, understanding the constant challenges, such as climate change and ECAs, competing needs. We want a plan to bring us to that level of service. It will require an initial investment upfront but if we do it right, incorporating these principles and approaches, the maintenance needs will wane.

Q: Hotel and Lodging Tax that supports tourism. Can that be applicable towards park maintenance? This taps into the P3 idea. The need to be creative and find solutions for sustainable funding.

Recap: Themes and Recommendations

**Resources:** The idea is to emphasize the comprehensive budget. Sub-bullets covers the phases/continuum, calling out specifics (including but not limited to). Funding so we are set-up for success. Resources, Recommendation 5: Fund generator, like P3. Keep as separate bullet, call out Emissions Tax or Lodging Tax. Budget need and then revenue.

**Viewpoint Management Plans:** Focusing on overarching VMP, updating the 2005 and having pull-out that are the site-specific plans for the 16 designated sites. The pull out are simplified but reference back to the overarching detailed plan.

**Best Management Practices:** Most focus on the second bullet. Deleting 'redefining' but include the remainder. Not locked into 'as is' or 'was'. Add "Restoration. design and maintenance procedures"

**ASK:** Wordsmithing needed on second bullet. Safety is first and foremost and do not stray from that. Add 'existing and projected risks' to fourth bullet under BMP.

**Future Considerations:** Emphasize the need for ongoing conversation, highly recommending Phase 2 which should include but not be limited to: designation criteria, and process. Criteria is a call out. Didn't talk about second or third bullets but did on the fourth. Fourth is being consistent with language, adding racial equity and social justice. Important to align with city values. We can drop second and third or leave as is. Principles and criteria as pertains to current 16 as well as future sites. **ASK:** Wordsmith-morph one and three. Theme: **Future Considerations** or Phase 2. Wants to spell out next steps. Leave themes as is but put emphasis Recommendation 1- **ASK:** wordsmith, immediate next steps. Embark on city-wide conversation, but that should be specific. Is it a sub-bullet? Develop Phase 2 that includes criteria, process, and that should include a city-wide conversation. Have bold Phase 2 with sub-bullets that include but are not limited to.

**Other:**

Decided phased approach for restoration.

Prioritize amongst 16, acknowledging that some have more needs than others.

**Questions:** To gauge thoughts. Mostly yes and nos, with a couple open ended.

**Themes-** Yes

**Funding-** Yes. The continuum of the comprehensive.

**Phased-** Yes

**Criteria:** Top priority, those that do not have a VMP. Bottom are those that have minimal needs (like beach viewpoints or budgets small). Health and Safety. Racial Equity. Site Needs. High Use/High Frequency/Iconic. Current VMP. Do we want to weigh in on criteria? Need criteria so it's a phased. Want to have something so default isn't just based on community requests. Have SPR takes these into account when priorities phases.

**Template VMP:** Yes. Include renderings, design lens, specs, goals and values. Site specific plans should reference more detailed overarching plan (2005 update). Maintain views of (fill in the blank) as determined by SEPA guidelines (such as 205 guidelines). Site by site, should provide narrative of what the view is. Overlay Equity Map into studies/plans. Suggestion: to map racial covenants into plans. Also, may want to identify future impacts, and map history of land, how has changed over different influences. Formation of viewpoints, slides or seismic changes. Request to include technical assessments such as what was provide by HWA and ESA (consultants at 9.26.18 meeting). Recommend way to measure qualitative aspects, perhaps through future outreach/engagement efforts, or through a city-wide conversation/educational campaign. Capture the story of the experiences, relationship with legacy. Have index/Table of Content.

**Level of Restoration:** Yes. Restoration should serve multiple purposes.

**Next Phase:** Yes.

**What does success look like?**

Development and funding of a Viewpoints policy that incorporates the distinction of restoration needs between natural areas in viewsheds at Designated Viewpoint parks, and natural areas elsewhere in the parks system.

Viewpoint policies that promote access, safety, and enjoyment for all with forward-thinking plans that are safe and accessible for those who use and maintain them—while emphasizing the need to prioritize investments in historically underserved and underrepresented communities.

Add innovative funding to implement the plans.

**ASK:** Word smith: Combine the comments. Funding of policy. Funding of implementation.

Running themes: Action. Immediate. BIG. Right.

**Public Comment:**

As making your recommendations, the focus is on 16. Be careful about how you draft this and not leaving an unintended footprint. Designated viewpoints, that does not mean these are "the" viewpoints.

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These are viewpoints among viewpoints that SPR is going to fund. Request opening statement that 'viewpoint parks' be changed. Focus is on 16 designated viewpoints. Also, about volunteers and steep slopes, volunteer time is significant. Where volunteers are allowed is important for boots on the ground and grant money. Won't be able to raise money if viewpoints are only be defined as the 16 and others are not recognized as such. Other parks shouldn't just be allowed to be overgrown as the Phase 2 is developed.

Comment: Because there are the 16 designated and they might be maintained at a higher level, this is by no means an indicator that other parks will not be maintained. SPR will address others, but maybe in a different way.

Are there other restrictions that prevent achieving the desired outcomes? Colman Park has been neglected for years and there is now a crew doing GSP restoration. GSP restoration does not entertain historic preservation or viewpoint considerations. So, we are going to be moving forward with trees being planted in the next couple months that will further complicate the view.

Another limitation is that volunteers are not allowed on steep slopes. It's a health and safety issue.

Closing: This was a quick ask with an aggressive timeline and the group stepped up and accomplished what was asked of you. Thank you for thinking beyond status quo.

Next Steps: Will send out the minutes and revised recommendations based on tonight's conversation before it is presented to the Superintendent. And will keep you informed as items are considered.