

# Duwamish River Parks Management Strategy



## A Living Landscape

The shoreline at this site restores historic topographical and planting conditions that had been diminished by more than 50 percent. Expanded habitat, including native trees and plants, along with tidal mixing of fresh and marine water in the estuary create welcome living conditions for salmon, birds and mammals.

A riparian zone occupies the slope between the street's upland elevation and the water. The cottonwood trees planted here grow tall and quickly. The cottonwood canopy provides shade while its leaves and small branches create organic litter, enriching the soil, protecting and sustaining slower growing cedar trees.


The transition zone has been planted with native shrubs like snowberry and red osier dogwood. They have roots that help stabilize the soil along the middle of the bank. Their dense growth provides food and shelter for birds and other critters.

Grasses and sedges flourish in tidal elevations designed for marsh vegetation. A mix of fresh and marine water, known as brackish water, floods this zone at daily high tides. Together, these restored habitats support both resident and migratory fish and wildlife.



The riparian zone, transition zone and marsh vegetation are part of the Living Landscape.



A scenic view of a pond at Village Park. The foreground is dominated by tall, golden-brown grasses. The pond's surface is calm, reflecting the surrounding greenery and the clear blue sky. In the background, a large, rusted industrial structure, possibly a water tower or part of a mill, stands amidst a dense forest of trees with some autumn-colored foliage. The sky is a deep, clear blue with a few wispy clouds.

***“The Duwamish Valley youth inspire us all because they work to improve their immediate environment. We would love if they could also have access to green jobs opportunities in the area. Instead of learning just from an office job, they should have access to learn from hands-on experiences taking place in the parks.”***

*Maribel Pastor, Member, Port Community Action Team*





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# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Port of Seattle exists on Indigenous land. We acknowledge the ancestral homelands of those who walked here before us and those who still walk here, keeping in mind the integrity of this territory where Native peoples identify as the Duwamish, Suquamish, Snoqualmie, and Puyallup, as well as the tribes of the Muckleshoot, Tulalip, other Coast Salish peoples, and their descendants. We are grateful to respectfully live and work as guests on these lands with the Coast Salish and Native people who call this home. This land acknowledgment is one small act in the ongoing process of working to be in good relationship with the land and the people of the land.



# 1. CONTEXT FOR A STRATEGY

The Port of Seattle Maritime Division owns and maintains a 44-acre system made up of parks and public access sites. Nine of the parks are located along the Duwamish River. These park lands were developed incrementally over the past 35 years, primarily as mitigation for Port development projects.

The Duwamish River Parks represent unique assets, with distinct settings and one-of-a-kind views; most of the parks have adjoining designated habitat restoration areas. The individual character of each of these sites is both a strength and a weakness when it comes to park management.

The independent development of each park has resulted in a system that is complex and underutilized, but with potential to more directly benefit the local community. At the same time, the community recognizes some common features the parks have to offer.

As a system, the Duwamish River Parks have a compelling story to tell about Indigenous cultures, restoring natural systems, and the river that unites it all. As testament to the potential community relevance, the Port's 2020 park renaming campaign, Incredible Parks Want Incredible Names, attracted over 13,000 unique visitors to its online engagement hub.

In 2019 the Port Commission adopted Resolution 3767 which established the Duwamish Valley Community Benefit Commitment Policy Directive. It outlines a set of initiatives the Port will take to support valley communities in recognition of the historic burden that industry has had on the valley including the resilient communities that are disproportionately impacted by inequities and disparities. This strategy is contained in the Resolution 3767 policy directive.





# Existing Duwamish River Parks System

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The nine Duwamish River Parks that are the subject of this strategy document include spaces that range from pocket park viewpoints to multi-acre restoration areas. With a few exceptions, the majority of these parks have their roots in the 1985 Port Master Plan for public access sites along the river. More than half of these were constructed in the late 1980s. A portion of the parks are located within neighborhoods or on trails, but many are tucked amongst industrial uses and are difficult to find. The common amenity amongst them is either physical or visual access to the Duwamish River. Beyond that they vary in what amenities are present, what activities they support, or how accessible they are. An understanding of the existing sizes, locations, and community use is important when considering potential improvements to better serve the community and promote activation of the parks. Following is a list of the nine parks, location map, and a summary table of the parks conditions.

- **Duwamish River People’s Park**  
(previously Terminal 117 Park)  
**8700 Dallas Ave S**  
Newest 14-acre park and habitat restoration site completed in 2022 with accessible amenities and signage in the South Park neighborhood.
- **həʔapus (Hah ah poos) Village Park**  
(previously Terminal 107 Park)  
**4700 West Marginal Way SW**  
9.4-acre archaeological, cultural, and ecological site with informal water access area actively used by hand-carry boat programs.
- **tuʔəlaltxʷ (toolalt) Village Park**  
(previously Terminal 105 Park)  
**4014 West Marginal Way SW**  
1.56-acre park with fishing pier, water access via steps, a covered picnic table, lawns, landscape, and signage.
- **sbəqwaʔ (sbaqwah) Park**  
(previously Terminal 108/Diagonal Park)  
**4663 Diagonal Ave S**  
0.78 acre park with open lawns, a restored shoreline, and a small hand-carry boat launch site on Lower Duwamish Waterway.
- **taʔtaʔucid (tathtathootseed) Park**  
(previously 8th Ave S Park)  
**7748 8th Ave S**  
0.18-acre neighborhood pocket park with community art and stair access to the river.
- **Terminal 18 Park**  
**3401 Klickitat Ave SW**  
1-acre park with covered picnic tables, landscaping, benches and a high-tide hand-carry boat launch.
- **Salmon Cove Park**  
(previously Turning Basin #3)  
**10108 West Marginal Place S**  
2.1-acre restoration site with ancillary informal hand-carry boat launch area accessed by stairs.
- **Jack Perry Park**  
**3225 East Marginal Way S**  
0.83-acre park featuring hand-carry boat launch, sitting areas, and views of terminal operations.
- **Jack Block Park**  
**2130 Harbor Ave SW**  
Popular 6.5-acre park with shoreline walking path, play area, observation tower, and views of the City of Seattle. Existing pier is under repair.



# DUWAMISH RIVER PARKS SYSTEM MAP





The following table represents a snapshot of current conditions and features available at all nine Duwamish River Parks ranked by current usage levels. The blue-colored cells indicate existing limitations or challenges.

Park Name	Estimated Usage Level Ranking <sup>1</sup> (1 is highest, 9 lowest)	Located in Neighborhood? <sup>2</sup> (Y or N)	Located on Regional Trail? <sup>3</sup> (Y or N)	Size (Acres)	Parking Spots <sup>4</sup>	Year Built <sup>5</sup>	Physical Water Access (Y or N)	Fishing Pier (Y or N)	Water Views (Y or N)
Jack Block	1	N	Y	6.5	37	1998	Y	Y	Y
Duwamish River People's Park	2	Y	N	14	3+ On-Street	2022	Y	Y	Y
həʔapus Village Park	3	N	Y	9.4	13	Late 1980s	Y	N	Y
Terminal 18	4	N	N	1	5	Late 1980s	N	N	Y
taʔtaʔucid Park	5	Y	N	0.18	On-Street	2009	Y	N	Y
Salmon Cove	6	N	Proposed for 2026	2.1	3	1999	Y	N	N
Jack Perry	7	N	N	0.83	8	Late 1980s	N	N	Y
tuʔəlaʔbɔw Village Park	8	N	Y	1.56	10	Late 1980s	Y	Y	Y
sbəqwaʔ Park	9	N	N	0.78	18	Late 1980s	Y	N	N

1. Parks ranking below 5 are considered highly in need of activation. The ranking in this column is based on the public survey conducted for this process. Other information sources should be considered for gauging usage level as discussed in Chapter 5.
2. Only taʔtaʔucid Park and Duwamish River People's Park were considered to be located in a neighborhood from the standpoint that they are the only two parks with residential uses within a two-minute walk. Parks outside of a neighborhood can be more challenging to activate.
3. For purposes of the table, regional trail is defined as an off-street trail connecting different neighborhoods. While not a regional trail, there are on-street bike lanes serving taʔtaʔucid Park, and those bike lanes connect with the regional Duwamish Trail system. Parks that are not located on a trail are considered more challenging to activate.
4. Parks with less than 10 parking spots are considered more limited in the amenities they can provide and therefore take more effort to activate without additional parking.
5. Parks that have not had improvements constructed since the late 1980s are considered generally more likely to need updates sooner than other parks.



## Better Meeting Community Needs

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During development of the Duwamish River Parks Management Strategy, the Port evaluated the overall condition of the Port's nine Duwamish River Parks and their usage. While the parks are generally in good condition, improvements are needed to make the parks more relevant to nearby communities. A goal was set that improvements to the Duwamish River Parks system should be informed by community input in order to create a system that can better meet community needs.

As part of Parks Management Strategy development, the project team collected public input to better understand community priorities. This outreach included a public survey and a series of conversations with near-Port communities and

stakeholders asking what changes they want to see in the parks.

The Parks Management Strategy project builds on previous public engagement efforts such as the 2020 Incredible Parks Want Incredible Names campaign that resulted in re-naming six of the nine parks. This campaign, along with other reports created by Port staff and stakeholders, provided a framework for the survey and conversations conducted during community outreach.

The priorities that emerged from the community conversations and survey results outlined in Chapter 2 guide the management strategy outlined in this strategy document for the Duwamish River Parks.

## Create a Framework for Decision-Making

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The Port identified that in order to effectively manage the Duwamish River Parks, there must be a consistent framework to guide decision-making throughout the entire Port park system.

While this document lays out an initial framework for changes across the Port park system, the Port cannot anticipate all opportunities that will emerge in the future, such as permit mitigation requirements to develop additional public access sites or unsolicited offers of art for installation in a park. With this in mind, Chapter 4 identifies a set of recommended policies that the Port will utilize when faced with future decisions.





## 2. COMMUNITY OUTREACH



### Overview

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The Port launched a four-month community outreach effort in February 2024 to hear about what changes near-Port communities would like to see in the Duwamish River Parks system, and to gather feedback to inform Port management of the parks in a way that is supportive of the community development goals of Duwamish Valley communities. In order to prioritize resilient communities that are disproportionately impacted by inequities and disparities and connect with local residents, the outreach team met with community-based groups in the Duwamish Valley to gather input through a series of small to medium sized group conversations.

In addition to conversations with established community groups, a public survey was also

crafted and made available online throughout the outreach period in order to maximize feedback, especially from potential new and casual park users who may have been unfamiliar with the Port's park system. The initial survey draft was shared with a community group to check for plain language and translatability; once finalized, the online survey was published on the project website with translations in Spanish, Khmer, Somali, and Vietnamese. The public survey was widely publicized through social media posts, on signs posted directly in the parks, and during all in-person events and meetings attended by the outreach team. The survey was also distributed to over 1,200 email addresses during the outreach period. Details of the survey results are included in Appendix A.



The outreach team also attended community events and meetings to raise awareness about the Parks Management Strategy project, solicit feedback, distribute surveys and answer questions. To connect directly with active park users, signs were placed in all Duwamish River Parks with a QR code linking to the survey and informational tables were set up on three different weekends in h̄ap̄us Village Park, Jack Block Park, and Duwamish River People's Park, respectively, to facilitate conversations and to provide opportunities to complete the survey on iPad or in print.



## Community Conversations

The Port connected with eight community-based groups during the outreach period. Groups had varying levels of familiarity with Port of Seattle projects and represented a range of relationships to the Port, from completely new to longtime, established Port partners. These groups included the Georgetown Community Council, South Park Neighborhood Association, Villa Comunitaria, Cultivate South Park, Port Community Action Team, River Access Paddle Program, Duwamish Valley Sustainability Association, and Amigos de Seattle.

The Port also tabled at the POM Foundation Lunar New Year and the Duwamish Alive! Spring River Clean Up events. A detailed summary of each conversation can be found in Appendix B. The goal of these conversations was to share information about the Port Parks Management Strategy project goals and process and collect feedback from a diverse range of local residents.

## Common Themes

Several clear themes and opportunities for changes in the parks emerged from the conversations with community-based groups. Community groups that are more distantly connected to the Port are less aware of the parks as a community resource, and even engaged community members are not always aware of a distinction between Port park resources and City park resources. Several community groups also identified a positive correlation between park usage/popularity and perceived park safety, and therefore prioritized raising awareness of parks and building visitorship as a way to improve park safety.

A common theme was that community-led programs are necessary to create a feeling of ownership and responsibility to public park spaces. Common topics for possible programs included art and environmental clean-up/ecological restoration, as well as economic development opportunities such as community gardens and spaces for local vendors.



Several groups expressed that youth-focused activities are a high priority for their community. These programs and activities can also lead to a physical improvement prioritized by several community groups—more art in parks.

Community groups prioritized the health of the Duwamish River Valley ecosystem. This is reflected in their desire for ecological educational programs and community clean up events, as well as for physical improvements such as better stormwater management systems, eco-friendly restrooms, and boat wash amenities that utilize grey-water systems. Community groups also associate cleaner parks with safety and prioritized park clean ups as another method of creating safer park environments. There is also a shared desire among community groups for better non-motorized

park access for pedestrians, cyclists, kayakers, and anyone else who rolls or paddles their way into parks. This access could be improved through a variety of methods identified by community, including additional benches, clearer directional signage, an improved boat launch in Hø?apus Park, and additional boat launches in other parks.

Community groups are highly interested in the parks assessment process and want to continue to be a part of the conversation as the Port of Seattle explores next steps for programming and physical improvements. There is a strong desire to see community values and priorities reflected in Port of Seattle parks.





# Survey Results

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Overall, there were 346 total survey responses, of which 313 were completed; some respondents opted not to answer demographic questions, however their feedback on changes to Port of Seattle parks has been included in the overall survey results.

Survey results were filtered by the following three identity and/or geography segments to compare results and uplift suggestions by underrepresented populations.

- **Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) respondents:** 21% of overall respondents
- **People with disabilities, elders, or youth:** 25% of overall respondents
- **Residents of zip codes 98106 and 98108 (representing the Georgetown and South Park neighborhoods) :** 20% of overall respondents.

Findings are summarized by survey question below.

## 1. Do you live, work, play, study, or worship in Georgetown or South Park?

Two hundred and three or **59%** of overall respondents answered yes. Of those who said yes:

- 24% identify as BIPOC
- 20% identify as people with disabilities, elders, or youth
- 29% reside in 98106 or 98108

## 2. Which of these Port of Seattle parks have you visited the most? (select up to 3)

Across overall survey respondents and segments, the most visited Port of Seattle parks were, in order:

1. Jack Block Park
2. Duwamish River People's Park
3. həʔapus Village Park

Residents of 98106 and 98108 also selected taltalucid Park as the 4th most visited park compared to overall survey respondents listing Terminal 18 Park as the 4th most visited.

## 3. What activities or programming would you like to attend in Port of Seattle parks? (select all that apply)

Across overall survey respondents and segments, the top three activities or programming were:

1. Community or cultural festivals
2. Native plant workshops
3. Local crafts or food markets tied with habitat restoration work parties

Some respondents also mentioned skateboarding events or infrastructure, youth-friendly programming, fishing, or no programming at all (see full list in **Appendix A**).

## 4. What brought you to a Port of Seattle park? (select all that apply)

The top reasons for visiting a Port of Seattle park across responses, including segments, were that respondents:

1. Live nearby a park
2. Walk their dog at a park
3. Attended an event at a park

Many respondents also identified social opportunities, exercising, and enjoying nature as reasons they visit parks (see full list in **Appendix A**).

## 5. How do you get to a Port of Seattle park? (select all that apply)

How visitors get to a park were the same across overall responses and segments, in order of popularity:

1. Car
2. Walk, roll, or skate
3. Bike



We want to make sure we reach a diverse range of people throughout the Duwamish Valley. Please check if you identify as any of the following (leave blank if not):

Demographic	Response Count	Percent of Total Responses
Youth or young adult (ages 16-21)	12	3.8%
Elder or senior (ages 65+)	51	16.3%
Person with a disability	34	10.9%
American Indian / Alaska Native / Indigenous	11	3.5%
Black, African American, African	7	2.2%
Pacific Islander, Native Hawaiian	3	1.0%
Asian, Asian American	21	6.7%
Latina, Latino, Latine/x	29	9.3%
Middle Eastern / North African	11	3.5%





## Amenities by Park

For survey question 2, respondents were able to select which park(s) they visited most frequently. Based on their answers, the survey populated follow-up questions focused on the types of amenities respondents would like to see at parks they visited. Some of the amenities represented in the survey answers, such as natural habitat restoration sites, walking trails, and shaded areas, already exist within parks. Public support expressed for existing amenities should be interpreted as support for more of or improvements to said amenity. The survey results as a whole reflect the values and priorities of the public and can be considered a guide for future investment in park spaces rather than a list of specific improvements to make.

The top three (or sometimes more) priorities respondents expressed for each park are shown below; priorities are broken out for overall, total survey responses and for three primary demographic segments (BIPOC, people with disabilities, elders, and youth, and 98106 and 98108 zip codes -Georgetown and South Park residents). Cells that are merged in the tables indicate a tie in priorities.

### Jack Block Park

The top priority across segments for Jack Block Park was habitat restoration followed by shaded and sheltered areas. Adding dog-friendly amenities represented a close third choice.

Respondents	First choice	Second choice	Third choice
<b>BIPOC respondents</b>	Habitat restoration and shaded and sheltered areas		More lighting
<b>People with disabilities, elders, and youth</b>	Habitat restoration	Shaded or sheltered areas	A restroom*
<b>98106 and 98108 residents</b>	Habitat restoration	Dog-friendly amenities	Shaded or sheltered areas and a restroom*
<b>Overall</b>	Habitat restoration	Shaded or sheltered areas	Dog-friendly amenities

\*The restroom option was incorrectly included in the Jack Block Park survey questions, as the park already has public restrooms.

### Duwamish River People's Park

The top priorities across segments for Duwamish River People's Park were habitat restoration and a restroom followed by shaded or sheltered areas.

Respondents	First choice	Second choice	Third choice
<b>BIPOC respondents</b>	Habitat restoration	A restroom	Shaded or sheltered areas
<b>People with disabilities, elders, and youth</b>	A restroom	Habitat restoration	Interpretive signs
<b>98106 and 98108 residents</b>	Habitat restoration	Shaded or sheltered areas	A restroom
<b>Overall</b>	Habitat restoration	A restroom	Shaded or sheltered areas



## Jack Perry Park

Jack Perry Park had a low number of respondents across segments which presented a challenge in prioritizing options. Respondents identified the following as priorities: habitat restoration, a restroom, dog-friendly amenities, more lighting, and drinking fountains.

Respondents	First choice	Second choice	Third choice
BIPOC respondents	Dog-friendly amenities	Habitat restoration	A playground, a restroom, more lighting, or drinking fountains
People with disabilities, elders, and youth	More lighting and drinking fountains		Habitat restoration, interpretive signs, and a restroom
98106 and 98108 residents	Habitat restoration and sheltered or shaded areas		Improved walking trails, interpretive signs, a restroom, drinking fountains, dog-friendly amenities
Overall	A restroom	Habitat restoration	Improved walking trails and more lighting

## Terminal 18 Park

The top priorities across all segments for Terminal 18 Park were habitat restoration and a restroom followed by dog-friendly amenities.

Respondents	First choice	Second choice	Third choice
BIPOC respondents	Habitat restoration	A restroom	Shaded or sheltered areas, drinking fountains, and a playground
People with disabilities, elders, and youth	A restroom	Habitat restoration	Improved walking trails
98106 and 98108 residents	Habitat restoration and dog-friendly amenities		More lighting, shaded or sheltered areas, interpretive signs, as restroom
Overall	Habitat restoration	A restroom	Dog-friendly amenities

## Salmon Cove Park

There was consensus among respondents for Salmon Cove Park on a restroom being a top priority followed by habitat restoration and improved walking trails. Local residents also showed interest in dog-friendly amenities.

Respondents	First choice	Second choice	Third choice
BIPOC respondents	A restroom	Habitat restoration and drinking fountains	
People with disabilities, elders, and youth	A restroom	Improved walking trails	Habitat restoration
98106 and 98108 residents	Habitat restoration, a restroom, and dog-friendly amenities		
Overall	A restroom	Habitat restoration	Improved walking trails



## tuʔəɫaltxʷ (toolalt) Village Park

The top priority across segments for tuʔəɫaltxʷ Village Park was habitat restoration followed by improved walking trails and interpretive signs.

Respondents	First choice	Second choice	Third choice
BIPOC respondents	Habitat restoration	Improved walking trails	Shaded or sheltered areas, interpretive signs, and a restroom
People with disabilities, elders, and youth	Habitat restoration	Shaded or sheltered areas, improved walking trails, interpretive signs, a restroom	
98106 and 98108 residents	Habitat restoration and interpretive signs		Improved walking trails
Overall	Habitat restoration	Improved walking trails	Interpretive signs and a restroom

## həʔapus (ha ah poos) Village Park

The top priorities for həʔapus Village Park were habitat restoration and a restroom followed by improved walking trails.

Respondents	First choice	Second choice	Third choice
BIPOC respondents	Habitat restoration	Improved walking trails	A restroom
People with disabilities, elders, and youth	Habitat restoration	A restroom	Improved walking trails and interpretive signs
98106 and 98108 residents	A restroom	Habitat restoration	Improved walking trails
Overall	Habitat restoration	A restroom	Improved walking trails

## sbəqwaʔ (sbaqwah) Park

The top priorities for sbəqwaʔ Park were difficult to ascertain due to the low number of responses. Habitat restoration continued to be a high priority along with a restroom and dog-friendly amenities.

Respondents	First choice	Second choice	Third choice
BIPOC respondents	Dog-friendly amenities	Habitat restoration, drinking fountains, and a restroom	
People with disabilities, elders, and youth	A restroom	Habitat restoration, improved walking trails, drinking fountains, interpretive signs, more lighting	
98106 and 98108 residents	Habitat restoration	Dog-friendly amenities	Drinking fountains and a restroom
Overall	Habitat restoration	Improved walking trails, interpretive signs, and dog-friendly amenities	



## ᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕᑕ (tathtathootseed) Park

Habitat restoration was a top priority of respondents while other priorities were not as clear across segments due to a low number of responses. Other priorities included shaded or sheltered areas, improved walking trails, and interpretive signs.

Respondents	First choice	Second choice	Third choice
BIPOC respondents	Habitat restoration	More lighting and shaded or sheltered areas	
People with disabilities, elders, and youth	Interpretive signs	Improved walking trails and dog-friendly amenities	
98106 and 98108 residents	Habitat restoration	Drinking fountains	Shaded or sheltered areas, improved walking trails, interpretive signs
Overall	Habitat restoration	Improved walking trails	Interpretive signs



# Key Findings

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- **Build public awareness of Port of Seattle parks.**

During community conversations, the project team found that many community members were not aware of Port of Seattle parks. In addition, the majority of survey responses came from existing park visitors and there is future opportunity to engage potential park visitors who may not be aware of Port-owned parks or have the ability to get to a Port of Seattle park.

- **Have a clear point of contact for Port of Seattle parks.**

Conversations with several community groups revealed the need for a clear point of contact for information and coordination about park programs, activities, and private event applications. Community organizations are not aware of who at the Port of Seattle they should contact regarding events and programs that may be a good fit for Port of Seattle parks. Consider identifying an existing staff member to serve as the main point of contact or a new hire.

- **Continue engaging with the public throughout the strategy process.**

Community groups expressed interest in hearing future updates from the Port about park improvements and general park news. There was a strong desire from the public for the Port to continue community conversations and take community input into account through the entirety of the park improvement process.

- **Serve as a community convener around the Duwamish River Parks system.**

Many community groups in the Duwamish River Valley work at the intersections of environmental justice, youth education and community health. The Port has an opportunity to convene these groups to give them a way to collaborate with one another. Additionally, welcoming community groups into the parks and encouraging their partnership would increase park usage and activation.

- **Improve non-motorized access to parks and promote river-based recreation.**

Community groups expressed a shared desire for better non-motorized park access for pedestrians, cyclists, kayakers, and anyone else who rolls or paddles their way into parks. This access could be improved through a variety of methods identified by community, including additional benches, clearer wayfinding signage, an improved boat launch in Həʔapus Park, and additional boat launches in other parks. With about three quarters of survey respondents getting to Port of Seattle parks by car, there is also a need for additional public transportation options that takes people to and from parks.

- **Continue supporting the public in environmental education, restoration and clean up events.**

During community conversations, community groups emphasized the health of the Duwamish River Valley ecosystem and expressed a desire for environmental education programming and community clean up events. Habitat restoration was the top priority across almost all the parks for survey respondents. The Port currently supports several community clean-up initiatives in the Duwamish River Parks and will continue to invest in those efforts.





## SPOTLIGHT: Educational Programming

Wide-ranging community groups have discovered that Port parks are an ideal setting for educational programming. Educators and community organizations have experienced that the narratives of restoring the river's natural systems "come to life" when delivered in a Port park or adjoining Port restoration site. In fact, some of the story telling is the story of Seattle, including the channelization of the river to optimize the industrial base, or the more recent coming to terms with industry's disproportionate impacts on BIPOC communities.

Some of the educational programming that takes place in the Duwamish River Parks is lecture-based, but just as often the participants are completely hands-on in their learning, engaged in activities such as care of riparian vegetation or invasive weed removal. Often the programming is specifically

focused on Duwamish Valley youth to cultivate their interest in careers in sustainability and maritime fields.

Groups that have partnered with the Port to sponsor restoration and educational events in the Duwamish River Parks include:

- Dirt Corps
- Duwamish River Community Coalition
- Environmental Coalition of South Seattle (ECOSS)
- Duwamish Valley Sustainability Association
- Puget Soundkeeper Alliance





# 3. WHERE ARE WE GOING?

## Priorities and Strategies for Changes in the Parks

### Implementing the Port's Vision and Goals

With the goal of making the parks a better reflection of the community, four priorities were developed to guide decision-making and next steps for changes in the parks to attract more use. The priorities and strategies in this chapter emerged from a collaborative process involving input from the community and evaluations of existing conditions and needs. These priorities capture community-driven recommendations to improve and enhance park amenities, recreation facilities, policies, programming, and related services into the future.

The following priorities and strategies aim to support community development, increase park connectivity, incorporate environmental justice and equity, and attract more users.

### Priority 1: Make Parks Accessible

The priority to make parks accessible is two-fold with the goal of enhancing accessibility and providing inclusive environments across all parks. At the scale of an individual park, accessibility pertains to identifying potential physical barriers to use and incorporating universally designed features. At the scale of a park system, accessibility is related to how easy it is to find information about the parks, visibility, and openness to community involvement, programming, and events.

- Provide vibrant, accessible, and inclusive community spaces catering to the recreation needs of residents and visitors of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.
- Create a more prominent presence of parks within the community. Coordinate with community groups and other organizations for broader reach.
- Consistently provide desired amenities to the community at all parks.



Duwamish River People's Park

## Priority 2: Build Sustainable Parks

The priority to build sustainable parks is focused both on the ecological restoration opportunities at these shoreline parks and the desire to create spaces that feel cared for and long-lasting due to quality investment and adequate attention from operations and maintenance. The goal of this priority is to incorporate sustainable elements in parks, establish a reputation that prioritizes sustainability, and demonstrate that these investments will be maintained.

- Ensure that parks are well-maintained and safe for community use.
- Prioritize projects or practices that emphasize sustainability.
- Balance passive recreation with habitat restoration.
- Establish best practices for tree canopy preservation and a transition plan to plant the next generation of native species trees.
- Support the Port's sustainability branding through on the ground investments in green infrastructure.



## Priority 3: Connect to the Water

The priority to connect parks to water recognizes the importance of the Duwamish River to the community and the unique opportunities for both physical and cultural connections that could be offered at these parks. Public water access is uncommon and these parks are nestled among the more dominant industrial and commercial uses of the waterfront. The Port can enhance the connection by providing amenities that focus on water or water-based programs, or by enhancing the visibility of these parks from the water.

- Seek opportunities to add, maintain or improve both physical and visual water access points.
- Prioritize programs that balance access with habitat protection and education.
- Include wayfinding, signage, and community-centered design elements so that water connections are identifiable and recognizable as part of a larger network of Port-managed parks.
- Consider the visibility of parks from the river and the potential to develop a water trail in partnership with a community group(s) in the future.





## Priority 4: Keep Parks Relevant to the Community

By prioritizing community relevance, the goal is to attract more consistent park users, and attract users who are stewards of the parks. This priority relates both to a commitment to the process of engaging the community and implementing changes they request. The goal is to build parks and provide or support programming that better serve the community, and facilitate cultural, natural, or historic preservation.

- Engage the community regularly to understand current needs and desires for park spaces.
- Support projects that provide habitat restoration and restroom facilities requested by the community.
- Support projects that provide amenities that complement programming.
- Identify opportunities for local groups and/or public-private partnerships to act as shared stewards and caretakers of parks.



## Planning Recommendations

The Parks Management Strategy can be achieved through sustained, committed implementation efforts. The following is a summary of recommendations that vary from site-specific amenities to early-stage planning. Each recommendation is based on the assimilation of community input, existing features or physical constraints at each park, and the four priorities. All proposed strategies need to ensure there is adequate operations and maintenance support as part of the review during implementation. Appendix C provides a preliminary feasibility summary and utility availability at each park. Recommendations fall into three categories:

- **Programming Amenities Desired by the Community** - Park improvements specifically requested during recent outreach activities.
- **Support Amenities for Activation** - Additional amenities that, combined with existing park conditions, will create additional opportunities to increase park use.
- **Community-Centered Design** - Continued encouragement for community input and contribution to park design and improvements.



## Programming Amenities Desired by the Community

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The parks created from the Port's original master planning efforts of the mid-1980s focused on restoration and public access. Since that time, the Port has sharpened its focus and commitment to increasing the use of parks by the community. The results of this survey of community desires for programming and amenities can be moved forward to consider the appropriateness of the ideas for specific parks. The following recommendations describe some of the results of those considerations and strategies for implementation:





- **Accessible hand-carry boat water access.** Several priorities are considered in proposing hand-carry boat access areas. Accessibility can be improved, safety can be increased by maintaining separation from sediment, and sustainability can be enhanced by designating a clear access area and reducing trampling. Existing programming needs would immediately use improved access at hǽʔapus Village Park. In addition, several parks offer access to the water only by way of stairs. There may be opportunities to retrofit these access points to remove barriers, such as at tǔʔəlaltx<sup>w</sup> Park.

- **Recommendations:**

- Standardize the design used for installation of any ramp or floating dock.
- Consider opportunities for a more permanent solution for a launch or ramp that would further improve accessibility and safety, if possible, based on the physical site conditions.
- Look for opportunities to slope access to the water instead of using steps to remove barriers.



In response to the high intensity use of the existing informal hand-carry boat launch at hǽʔapus, a more permanent solution could allow boaters to maintain more separation from sediment and control the footprint of impacts on the shoreline.





- **Barrier-free standards.** Based on both community survey results as well as demographic responses it would serve the community better if the port prioritized amenities or retrofits for a barrier-free park experience. Improvements that remove barriers will increase the number of users who can recreate at the Duwamish River Parks. Some existing barriers are minor and could be retrofitted as part of a maintenance effort; others may require a larger capital improvement project.

- **Recommendations:**

- Review replacement amenities or furnishings for ADA compliance.
- Evaluate parks for opportunities to retrofit curbs or replace stairs with ramps, or provide a ramp option.
- Require ADA compliance in new design development.
- Clearly describe accessibility of amenities on park websites or other online platforms.
- Seek opportunities to support community members with disabilities by providing specialized recreation amenities such as wheelchair access boat ramps or lowered railings at fishing piers for people fishing in wheelchairs.



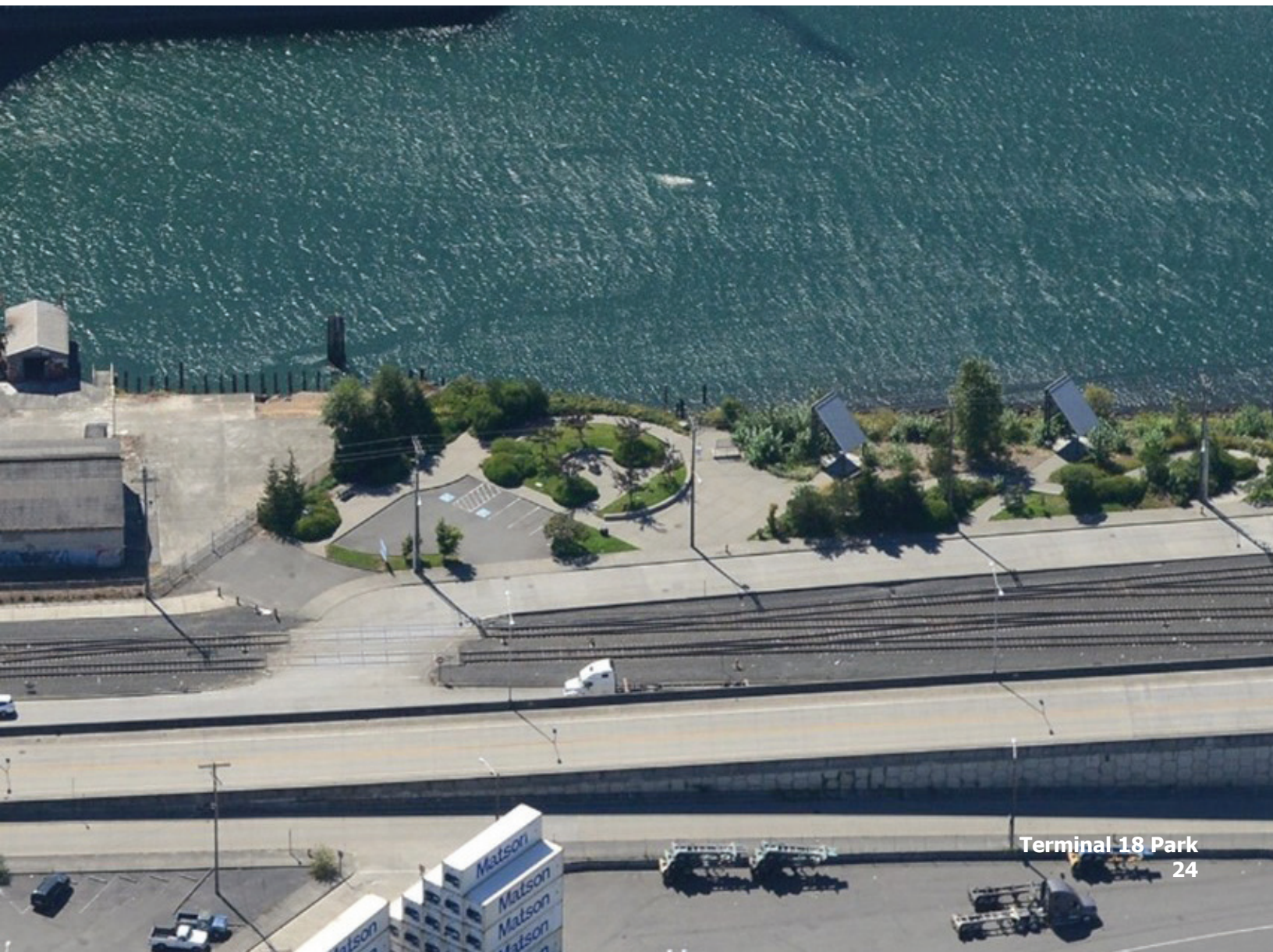
Toolalt is a good example of a park that has many features that could be activated through small design changes and more public awareness. The existing hand-carry boat access area is difficult to find and includes uneven rustic steps. Signage placement, view management, and a retrofit of the access to a ramp could help activate this park. With increasing popularity other features like a boot wash or kayak/canoe ramp system could be considered.



- **Community-led program amenities.** Several active community partners have engaged with the Port in the past and contributed to the building of the parks' identities. Relationships with community partners can be mutually beneficial when the Port can provide amenities that support the partner program needs, and the partner community activates the park by using them regularly. The skateboard community is an example of a potential partner that could activate an underutilized space if the Port provided a skatepark. The community survey included responses in support of skateboard infrastructure or events and youth-focused amenities. A niche program could be a good fit for an industrial setting, such as Terminal 18, for example, if the program was noisy.

- **Recommendations:**

- Seek community partnerships that are looking for program space that aligns with the physical capacity and values of port parks.
- Engage the community partner in the design development process.
- Encourage the design to include a signature element originating from the community partner (see 'Amenities desired by the community').





- **Dog-friendly amenities.** There was consistent community input in support of increasing the presence of dog-friendly amenities at the parks. Several existing parks include water fountains with dog-level water bowls, and dog waste bag dispensers, but it is not a universal feature. All parks allow dogs on a leash, though they are restricted from designated habitat restoration areas.

- **Recommendations:**

- Standardize a product for dog watering stations with drinking fountains, and dog waste dispensers and install them in all parks.
- Look for any opportunities for an off-leash dog area in the future. Current park areas are not large enough.
- Take into account community support of dog-friendly recreation when considering future events



Small pocket parks like this that are used by neighborhood residents as well as regional cyclists are good candidates for the installation of community desired standard amenities such as a dog-friendly water fountain or a bike rack.



tu?alaltxw Village Park  
Design Concept



# Support Amenities for Activation

Based on the Port's experience operating parks and community survey requests, specific combinations of amenities and features are proposed with the goal of increasing use. The idea with this category of recommendations is to recognize that there are existing amenities that need supporting amenities to be activated or made more successful.

- **Restrooms.** Certain programs and amenities require access to a bathroom to be a practical and successful offering to the public. These include kayak programs lasting several hours, reservable sheltered picnic table areas for large groups having picnics or events, or other uses in locations far from any other public amenities. Restrooms may need to be considered in some form, even temporary, in conjunction with amenities associated with this type of programming.
- **Recommendations:**
  - Consider the installation of a permanent restroom at h   apus Village Park to support the growing popularity of the hand-carry boat programming on site.
  - Pilot options for seasonal or temporary Restrooms in locations that currently have active use or programming. Options should allow for easy maintenance access and the ability to lock up or close the facility each evening or as needed.
  - As potential projects arise in the future, analyze whether each opportunity should include a bathroom based on location and operations and maintenance support.



h   apus Village Park has been identified as a primary candidate for consideration to add a permanent bathroom building by the entrance. This amenity would immediately support existing programming needs. Other recommendations include replacement of the water fountain with a dog-friendly water fountain to standardize this as an amenity that is present at all parks.





- **Duwamish River view management.** Habitat restoration along the shoreline is critical to restore function along the river, however, it is important to balance this restoration with the preservation of select viewpoints. These views are important to draw users and activate these spaces. In many cases, the current maintenance practice is to keep sightlines open and clear in parks by removing view-blocking shrubs, and limbing up trees. This increases a sense of safety for park users, and also reduces opportunities for encampments to be hidden. The two types of landscape areas that are not maintained this way are the habitat restoration areas and vegetated property lines that require screening.

- **Recommendations:**

- Support and encourage development of plans to maintain select water views, or visual access to the Duwamish River where the view or viewing area can be seen from elsewhere in the park, and existing amenities such as benches are present.
- Prioritize balancing water access opportunities, including both physical and visual access with shoreline habitat restoration.
- Look for signs of trampling or limb-breaking for where park users already want to have physical or visual access, and assess whether it makes sense to formalize them.
- Coordinate proposals for view management with the port restoration and permitting personnel.



The large open lawn area and relatively numerous parking spots available at sbəqwa Park make it a good candidate for amenities that would be used by larger groups such as a reservable picnic shelter. To support the activation of an amenity like this, maintenance of river views is a key draw, as well as the presence of a bathroom.

- **Group facility rental.** The community survey results included a desire for shade or shelter at the parks, such as a picnic shelter for community gatherings. Reservable picnic shelters are popular and can provide a space for small events, however there is a gap in availability along the Duwamish waterway.

- **Recommendations:**

- Based on existing available parking and open space, consider adding a large, reservable picnic shelter at sbəqwa? Park.
- The addition of a bathroom would attract more reservations of this amenity.
- In determining the location of the shelter, active management of an open view of the river would also be important to attract reservations.



- **Human-powered boat day-use network.** The port is in the unique position of managing multiple public access points along the Duwamish River. One approach to activating the use of these parks is to present them as a connected network of access points and promoting the river-side face of each park.

- **Recommendations:**

- River-facing signage or markers, such as informational buoys, pointing out the park locations could be installed to draw attention to their presence.
- A Duwamish trail could be proposed along with educational materials about human-powered boat etiquette and navigation among the industrial uses and larger boats.
- Parks such as Salmon Cove that have limited parking and struggle with encampments could consider boat access only day-use areas.



A boat access only day-use area could be considered for Salmon Cove or other parks that are more difficult to access by land, have limited parking, or attract misuse due to their remote location. The Port could develop a signage and buoy system to make public shoreline locations clear from the river. There is an opportunity to connect parks with the water





- **Parking.** The Port strives to encourage non-motorized access to their parks. However, currently most of the parks are not walkable to a neighborhood and roughly 80% of survey respondents said they drive to Port parks, not walk or bike. Depending on the program or park, parking should be considered a limiting factor for activation. Many park locations do not have an option to add parking. Some activities require a car to transport equipment, such as kayaking, or bringing your dogs to a dog park from far away. Parks that do have parking could be prioritized for certain programs.

- **Recommendations:**

- Consider limitations of parks with little to no parking provided when considering expanding programs or holding events.
- Where parks have adequate parking, consider expanding programs or locating amenities there that depend on some parking to succeed.
- Where parking is limited, consider encouraging access from boats and from the water. See 'Human-powered boat day-use network'.

- **Standardized amenities and signage.** The final recommendation for amenities that support activation in all parks would be to standardize the presence of select amenities and signage. This standardization serves to both create a unified identity for all Port parks as well as a brand or expectation by users for what amenities they can count on at port parks.

- **Recommendations:**

- Select a standard approach to site furnishings and sign styles at all parks. This could mean a standard manufacturer or brand is used. Alternatively, the port could encourage a standard practice of material re-use and custom furnishing design at all parks.
- Standardize the presence of specific amenities or furnishings at all parks. For example, the previous recommendation of providing dog-friendly amenities at all parks. The Port can commit to always having certain features at all of their parks such as native planting, views of the water, drinking water, and benches, for example.
- Standardize signage at all parks, including placement and spacing. Currently, there is a mix of signs and styles. Sign placement can impact the legibility of information if too many signs are placed next to one another for example. As signs need to be updated, the Port can replace them with the new standard.
- Expand the icon symbols used on signs to represent the amenities desired by, and provided to, the community at each park.





# Community-Centered Design

When past Port projects have engaged the community to contribute to the art, furnishings, or other decorative features of a park, the results have been successful, and the installations have remained beloved and respected. At taltalucid Park, the Port partnered with the community on a park feature incorporating hand-painted tiles with a traditional Latinx design motif. The tiles are applied to a seating wall and on the stair face that extend down to the river. The custom-built wooden bench on the pier at Duwamish River People’s Park provides users with an elegant seat over the water. An elevated boat sculpture with interpretive panels at həʔapus Village Park describes the legacy of land use at the park site. On the one hand, parks can be made more accessible by standardizing certain amenities or features, as previously described in the Activation-Focused Support Amenities section. On the other hand, engaging the community and allowing features or amenities to be personalized by the community can promote ownership, stewardship, and a sense of identity that can contribute to long-term park use and activation.

- **Recommendations:**

- Support community involvement in the design vision around the arts for park amenities.
- Support community involvement in the review or approval process of art or park feature donations for installation at a park.
- Prioritize local businesses or artists when contracting or commissioning custom park features.
- Encourage ‘hands-on’ opportunities for the community to implement the vision in a park and contribute to its unique identity.
- Install a community information board on the side of the maintenance building at həʔapus Village Park to post programming information. Look for local partners to create and construct the board with input from the community.

Existing programs at həʔapus Village Park could be supported by minor improvements including a boot wash area and a community message board. The message board weather-proof casing could be an artistic feature in itself, with decorative features contributed by the community.



**həʔapus Village Park  
Design Concept**



## SPOTLIGHT: Community Festivals



Some of the clearest cases of Port parks building social cohesion are community festivals. This was a clear message through the survey and other community input channels of this process. The annual Duwamish River Festival and the semi-annual Duwamish Alive both offer mature models for running community festivals in the valley. The Duwamish River Festival is run by the Duwamish River Community Coalition and has been held, alternatively, in the Duwamish River People's Park and the City of Seattle Duwamish Waterway Park. The event includes music and entertainment, local food vendors, and tabling by community organizations and public agencies. The Duwamish Alive events have many of the same components but are organized around the marquee activity of habitat restoration work parties.





# 4. HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

Whereas Chapter 3 focused on a vision of a future state of the parks, this chapter outlines three ongoing efforts that will be key to making the parks more relevant to the community. In fact, optimizing the parks will require an interplay between physical park features and ongoing programmatic efforts. For example, if a community group proposes running a community garden within a park, the Port will turn to the decision-making criteria described in the Policy section below.

## Policy

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This section is a set of policies that will guide the Port's future management of the Duwamish River Parks system.

At the most fundamental level, the Port seeks to invest in the system in recognition of the environmental justice condition that applies to the Duwamish Valley. The valley is home to resilient communities that are disproportionately impacted by inequities and disparities and the Port wishes to manage the parks in a way that helps the communities meet their own aspirations.

In recent years, the regulatory scheme for requiring public access mitigation has become more permissive of sites that are remote from the development that triggered them. In cases where this is allowed, the Port can locate any new parks where they are most valued. One locational issue that will be considered for new public access sites is the layout of surrounding properties. This stems from the situation of low usage levels at both Jack Perry Park and Terminal 18 Park, and the fact that their usage is hindered by the condition of all neighboring properties being large industrial sites with high security. This may not be the case in industrial areas with immediately adjacent residential communities. The Port will assess this on a case-by-case basis.



## Policy 1: Unsolicited offers for art and signage

From time to time, the Port receives offers for art pieces, monuments, or interpretive signage for a park, but without notice. The object in question could be very meaningful to some, but the Port will consider these proposals on a case-by-case basis. Environmental justice and equity will be considered in the decision-making, as well as:

- Consistency with the Port park system goal to tell the stories of groups in the near-Port community
- Messages that are conveyed by the creative work in relation to Port values and goals
- Potential for the object to contribute to park activation, especially outside of peak use times
- Americans with Disabilities Act accommodations
- Suitability considerations such as size / footprint, long-term durability, environmental impacts, and cost of site preparation.



## Policy 2: Proposals for reserved space for ongoing uses

In contrast with park programming – events that use the space temporarily and leave the park exactly as it was – the Port has received proposals for an outside group to control a portion of a park for an ongoing use or activity. Common examples include community gardens and civic science projects. The Port will consider these proposals on a case-by-case basis, accounting for:

- Whether the Port’s support of the project conveys a message to other park users and, if so, how those messages align to Port values and goals
- Potential to detract from other park activities, park resources, and public’s enjoyment of both
- Potential for park activation, especially outside of peak use times
- Potential to impede care and maintenance of the park
- Proposed footprint relative to the size of the park
- Duration of the use

## Policy 3: Commercial uses

Commercial uses can be very popular individually but without case-by-case review, commercial uses can detract from the typical, more passive, public use of these park spaces. Common examples of commercial uses in parks are food trucks and rental of small watercraft. Review considerations include:

- Potential to detract from the natural character of the park
- Potential to impede care and maintenance of the park
- Whether the business would compete in any way with other park programs run or overseen by the Port
- Potential for park activation, especially outside of peak use times

- Potential to increase social cohesion
- Potential for economic opportunity in the immediate community
- Potential for relationship- and trust-building between the Port and other partners

## Policy 4: Private Event Application Process

The Port currently has an adopted Park Use Policy for use in reviewing proposals for private events in the parks. The policy creates a permit process and gives the Port the authority to deny a permit for proposals that are not sufficiently protective of the public as summarized below:

- Protections for the public’s park use
  - Private events are confined to a portion of the park
  - Private events must agree to terms, including the conspicuous message that they will not be given exclusive use of the park on event day, in spite of fees they may pay
- Protections for Port-sponsored events
  - Maintaining an event calendar covering both the private and Port events ensures no conflicts for the Port events.
- Accommodation of private parties
  - Private parties are able to reserve space well in advance (subject to park use fee and damage deposit, as appropriate)
- Other safeguards:
  - Consultation of these Port functions on a case-by-case basis: Public Relations, Port Police, Marine Maintenance Facility Managers, and Risk Management





## Partnerships

The Port has already cultivated a deep network of partners, mostly for running educational and workforce development programming that utilize the parks and adjoining habitat sites. Such programming was revealed to have extensive support through this outreach process and there are opportunities to grow the partnerships. There may also be partnership opportunities linked to physical changes in the parks, as addressed below.

It is beyond the scope of this strategy document to prescribe the details of park-related partnerships. Opportunities will change over time. Rather, this section summarizes the types of community organizations that tend to make effective partners. This study finds that the Port is likely to find partners amongst organizations engaged in the following causes:

- Cleanup of the Duwamish River legacy contamination
- Duwamish Valley youth engagement
- Workforce development
- Economic development without displacement
- Environmental justice in the Duwamish Valley



## The link to physical park features

As discussed in Chapter 3, new physical park features could aid in the expansion of programming partnerships. Common suggestions for this included storage facilities, wash stations, and enhancements to hand-carried boat launches.

## Growth variables

The following issues are expected to need attention through ongoing and expanded programming partnerships.

- **Homegrown festivals** – The outreach process revealed extensive support for festivals and entertainment in the parks. The working models for these events are all community-run, but require significant work and resources from the community. The Port co-hosting events with community groups could be a successful model, while maintaining the homegrown feel of the current festivals.
- **Transportation for youth** – Bicycle and pedestrian access remains challenging for many Port parks. As a result, transportation of youth to youth-oriented programming appears to be placing a limit on the scale of programming. School districts are one type of partner that are accustomed to making busing arrangements, but resource and logistical limitations apply to this as well.
- **Language translation** – Programming often targets groups for whom English is not their first language. Arranging for adequate language translation services will be key, as stakeholders noted past cases where the translation services were not adequate. This might include co-hosting community events with the Port providing translation services for English speakers to expand participation.
- **Protection of restoration sites** – Programming that brings large numbers of people to the parks has the potential for damage to habitat restoration sites. This will have to be accounted for on a case-by-case basis. There have been past cases of using a system of youth volunteers to remind event participants about this issue.

## Partnerships beyond programming

The outreach process points to a few partnership opportunities beyond park programming. This includes working with artists and content creators for interpretive signage. There have also been past cases of community science installations in the parks, usually related to habitat.





## Branding and Marketing

The Port will continue to build on the effort to familiarize the public with our system of public lands along Seattle’s only river. This Duwamish River Parks system branding could work in concert with community development efforts originating within the neighborhoods of the valley, signaling a new chapter for both the parks and the neighborhoods.

The 2020 Incredible Parks Want Incredible Names campaign was a significant first step towards building a brand for the system of river parks. Through that process, the community submitted 3,366 park name ideas and the online engagement hub had over 17,000 unique visitors with 9,100 unique visitors before nominations were closed. That re-naming platform was followed by this stakeholder process, which, once again, revealed the community’s support for branding and marketing of the parks as a system.

The renaming campaign dealt with individual park names. However, the overall engagement on that platform points to the wisdom of building a brand for the parks – as a system. This is based on some key commonalities of the parks, and the powerful story telling potential of those common themes. The key themes in this regard are environmental education, environmental justice, and climate change adaptation themes. There are two sides to the climate change theme – the susceptibility of the valley to flooding linked to sea level rise and the park lands as sources of refuge during heat events. These themes are described in the final report of the Seattle Parks Foundation, the Port’s running-partner in the Incredible Parks Want Incredible Names campaign.

The project team considered the trade-off’s involved in defining a brand for the river parks when the Port also owns other public access assets. The other assets include isolated amenities such as interpretive signs and one other self-contained park, Centennial Park. At present, Centennial Park is a key property in the well-resourced Elliott Bay Connections partnership concerned with building and marketing a chain of public lands along the



Examples of expanded icon symbols that could be used to represent the amenities desired by, and provided to, the community at each park.

city’s central waterfront and extending north. Centennial Park is assured of successful marketing through Elliott Bay Connections, which is a key factor in excluding it from the branding effort being chartered here, and instead defining this branding effort around the Duwamish River.

Once the branding effort is underway, the Port will undertake corresponding marketing efforts. The efforts will be iterative based on learning about audiences over time and topics that resonate with the community. Chapter 5, Implementation, discusses marketing strategies.



## SPOTLIGHT: Small Watercraft Tours

In 2018 the Port launched its first-ever multilingual boat tour of the Duwamish River and Elliott Bay. Multilingual tours have become an annual event and are intended to raise awareness about Port operations, impact and community involvement. Interpretation during the voyages is offered in Spanish and Vietnamese.

Beyond the Port, community groups also host small watercraft tours of the Duwamish River, launching from parks such as hə́ʔapus Village Park and the Duwamish River People's Park. These tours utilize the hand boat launch facilities located in many of the Duwamish River Parks.

***Small watercraft tours are a unique opportunity to view and appreciate the Duwamish River Parks from the water.***





# 5. IMPLEMENTATION

## Next Steps

This report is a major milestone for establishing a parks strategy and the process behind it. There will be myriad efforts to implement the strategy, but this section covers implementation matters requiring strong guidance to ensure that the outcomes are consistent with this strategy document. In addition to the guidance provided, future implementation may require additional environmental review and improvements must be consistent with local, state, and federal policies and regulatory requirements.

**Design of park features.** Attention to detail will be imperative in the design of park features, ranging from restrooms to picnic shelters. If the park feature is not designed to work for users or for effective park operations, then there is a risk of misuse or maintenance challenges leading to unsafe or unsightly conditions that will negatively impact activation. Two key groups to involve in the design process are community members and Port operations staff. Depending on the project, the important Port operations to consult will include Port Police, Maintenance, and Environment and Sustainability.

**Tribal outreach.** The Port has a long-standing rapport with the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, the Suquamish Tribe, and the Duwamish Tribal Services. Collaboration with these organizations will be an essential step in the process of designing features that pay homage to Indigenous cultural heritage such as interpretive signs, or other park features that sustain a cultural connection to the water.



**Art and interpretive signs.** The design of art and interpretive signs should be an iterative process because there are important contributions needed from both the community and from Port staff. The fundamental goal of this strategy is making the parks more relevant to the community, and the most authentic ideation for art pieces and interpretive sign topics will originate there. At the



same time, Port staff are well positioned to advocate for how the evolving collection of art and signs holds together across all the parks. Port staff will also uphold graphical and signage “voice” standards across all Port park signage.

A working group should be formed, made up of both Port staff and community members, to build momentum for this initiative to refresh art and interpretive signage. Employing a working

group will attract a more vibrant ideation process compared to the Port reaching out individually to community artists and signage content contributors. The group would first consider a vision for art and interpretation within the whole Port park system, and then work together to establish criteria for evaluating ideas for commissioning art and signage or reviewing proposals for art donations at individual parks.

**Branding and Marketing.** As described in Chapter 4, there is great potential to build a brand for the Duwamish River Parks as a park system. The Port’s ongoing efforts towards this end will include:

1. Establishing visual standards - in conjunction with the development of visual standards for new interpretive signs that are discussed above.
2. Enhancing physical and digital wayfinding including on web platforms such as Google Maps.
3. Adding marketing topics about the Duwamish River Parks to the Port’s ongoing rotation of social media campaigns.
4. Using the list developed during this process for branding as well as strategy implementation updates.
5. Continuing to work with the community to create a clear identity for the Duwamish Valley Port Parks.





## Measures of Success

A notable aspect of this Park Management Strategy is that its goals are not easy to measure, by their nature. The goals of providing quiet refuge from city life – or inspiring youth about environmental job opportunities – are not necessarily common goals for urban parks. Measures of success may evolve over time, but the following metrics have been identified to evaluate progress over the short-term.



- **Reporting back with community groups.** The Port will be engaged with the community groups that provided input to this strategy (per Chapter 2) as it is finalized and implemented to ask if the strategy successfully represents their feedback. The Port will continue to conduct outreach to the same set of groups moving forward after the strategy is implemented to learn how they view the success of implementation efforts.
- **Tabulation of programs and events held at parks.** The Port will track events and use of park spaces by community partners for programming to see if there is any increase in activity as recommendations in this strategy document are implemented. This includes maintaining an event calendar as described in Policy 4.
- **Capital improvement project design.** The Port will stay on track to invest in infrastructure improvements at the different parks based on the recommendations in this document by forming community working groups to begin project design phases.
- **Social media analytics.** The Port has experience with using social media for analytical purposes. This goes beyond one-way messaging and measures topics that are resonating and with what segments of the public.
- **Cell phone metadata.** A variety of vendors sell data on the patterns of foot traffic to a given property. This data is anonymized and has long been valued by retailers. The data is also available for parks, and it could be retrieved before and after the Port implemented a significant change to illuminate shifts in park usage.



