

Renew the Legacy... Fulfill the Vision

Renton Parks, Recreation, Open Space
and Natural Resources Plan



Focus Group Summary-General

The City of Renton has begun the Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Natural Resources Plan process to update and expand the document that guides the development of the park system. This process includes, for the first time, analyzing and making recommendations for two important elements of the system: recreation programming and natural resources.

The plan process is currently in the early stages, collecting information about the current conditions of Renton's parks, recreation programs and natural resources and the opinions of the community about the improvements and new features that are needed. This includes a wide variety of public input opportunities to reach out broadly to the community as well as to focus in on key topics. This document summarizes three focus groups convened to discuss the existing conditions and needs around identified themes – the environment, organized active recreation and recreation services. Each summary includes the details of the meeting and the major points of the discussion. Attached to this summary are the agendas, invitation lists and materials provided at each meeting. Also attached are transcriptions of the graphic recording produced from each discussion.



For more information about the project including a project calendar and interim documents, visit the City's home page at www.rentonwa.gov and click on "Renew the Legacy... Fulfill the Vision"

Organized Outdoor Active Recreation Focus Group

Date 11/3/10

Time 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Location Highlands Neighborhood Center

Community Services Administrator: Terry Higashiyama

Team Leads: Leslie Betlach, Vanessa Dolbee

Participants: Chris Hanis, Lisa Holliday, Brian Kaelin, Gerry Kaiser, Kevin Masterson, Anita Parker, Huw Salmon, Exequiel Soltero, Michelle Tachiyama, Rich Turner

City Staff Participating: Shirley Anderson, Todd Black, Donna Eken, Andy O'Brien, Jennifer Spencer, Kristine Stimpson

Consulting Team Members (MIG): Ryan Mottau, Heather Kaplinger

This focus group was convened to gather information from the existing organizations providing active recreation, primarily sports teams and leagues, and the two major providers of field space within Renton, the City and the Renton School District. The major points of the discussion are summarized below and a graphic record created during the discussion is presented on the next page.

The starting point of this discussion was the current state of fields in Renton and how this resource is distributed to users. Overall, the City fields are considered to be in good shape, while the school fields suffer from some maintenance issues resulting from declining resources and increased use. Lack of maintenance at School District fields can become a safety issue. The King County owned fields at Petrovitsky Park are considered less desirable but do have lights. The primary field providers each have a single point of contact for field scheduling. Twice a year, prior to the spring and fall seasons, a scheduling meeting is held to work out the details. After that point, changes, additional requests and particularly post-season play are accommodated when possible by the staff of each organization and between the sports organizations themselves.

The number of fields in the system appears to be less of an issue than the configuration and capacity of fields. Upgrades to lights and playing surfaces would add to the playable time. Teams and leagues are looking for a higher quality field (they don't like to play on sand fields) and many sports are playing a year-round schedule, which limits the usefulness of multi-purpose fields. The fields could also be programmed differently for games and practices to stretch the playable space. Adult sports are crowded out of field space due to prioritization policies that focus on City and the School District programs that give priority to local youth seasonal sports. The general consensus was that this priority was correct but left little space for other user groups.

The idea was brought up that the lack of physical activity, particularly as it relates to obesity, is a public health issue. Improving the quality and/or increasing the quantity of sport facilities is a way to make facilities more accessible and increase activity among residents. Reduction of school district resources has a double impact on physical activity. Cutting or reducing physical education during school hours makes after-school sports the

Organized Outdoor Active Recreation Wall Graphic Transcription

11/3/10

This is a transcription of the notes from the group discussion, taken as the discussion was occurring (an image of these notes is included at the end of this document). Where needed for clarification, additional notes have been added in brackets [to make clear what was added and what came from the original discussion].

FIELD ACCESS & STATUS

- Coordination with school district
 - Outdoor [one point of contact]
 - Indoor [reservations and use are the responsibility of the] individual school
- Outside of school district access is a challenge
 - Players (adult) have to go elsewhere
- Prior to spring and fall seasons, fields are scheduled
- City fields are in good shape
 - Soccer and baseball
- Baseball fields at schools have some maintenance issues

ISSUES

- Scheduling
- Need for parking
- Need for seating
- Lights
- Field conditions
- Short staffed [both City and School, but especially School District]
- Volunteers prep fields [only at School District]
- School grass fields 5pm to dusk, scheduled each season
- Turf fields are scheduled into blocks of time
- Other fields are scheduled to one organization at the beginning of the season
- Users do a good job of coordinating among each other
- Year round seasons
 - Select baseball
 - Select soccer
- City has been more static [once fields are scheduled they are scheduled] than school district for scheduling fields [much more rescheduling]
- Maintenance improvements could increase field capacity to meet demand
- Overlap with County – County fields aren't desirable but they are lighted
- City fields are scheduled seasonally
 - Multi-use fields
 - Quality diminishes with blend of uses
- City has no volunteer opportunities on their fields [for field prep]
- Multi-use fields require careful scheduling
- City fields – Challenge for soccer groups to schedule out far in advance
- No major field facilities outside of the City and schools

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- School District stadium facilities are in demand and it is very hard to schedule
- Kent School District opens their fields
- Six different softball leagues
- Overlap of baseball leagues
- Liberty Park is the desirable location for finals
- Scheduling priorities
 - Seasonal and non-seasonal
 - Avoids conflict with year round season
 - City runs their programs first
 - School does the same
- Adult leagues have no priority
 - Continually get bumped
- Local gets priority over non-local
 - Youth over adult
 - Non-profit over profit
- Private schools and churches are a large user group

EMERGING SPORTS

- Lacrosse
- Cricket pitch
- Ultimate Frisbee
- Rugby
- Football (3 youth leagues)
- Adult baseball
- Adult fast pitch

PRICING POLICIES

- Baseball is affordable
- Youth sports are cheaper
- Grass fields no fee
- Little league pays some maintenance
- Fee schedule is comparative to other communities
- Field turf increases costs and demand for field
- Stadium improvements increase fees
- How are users not priced out?
 - Adults are scheduled out! Need some priority.
 - Can help pay for youths
 - Quality of field
 - People willing to pay more
 - Accessibility of fields
 - Priority schedule
 - Lights have a flat hourly rate
 - Access to staff affects money
 - Lack of staffing closes some facilities
 - Once the costs are divided to each team member field fees are not that much
- Amenities: Restrooms and water are a good thing
- Scholarships

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- Lack of P.E. in schools creates a demand for public spaces and fields
 - Obesity is a public health issue and what is the role of our tax dollars?
- If you break the rules you end up at the bottom of the queue

ROLE OF THE CITY

- The City sets the tone for the caliber of the sports leagues
 - Better quality Better participation
- Amount and quality of the fields is a major factor and type (quality and type)
 - Regulation fields are lacking
- Provide more and better facilities
- City does a great job of scheduling
- City maintains school fields?
 - Get schools out of Park and Recreation business
- Upgrades [needed in] South Renton
- Centralizing light scheduling

MAINTENANCE

- Improvements increases demand
- [If School District] shuts down fields, then others will get overused
- Lights and artificial turf – Ron Regis
- Renton – Large grass space/improvements
- Kiwanis Park: Goal post is close to playground
- Assess open areas at schools
- On-going maintenance fund for school district fields through public/private partnerships

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Organized Outdoor Active Recreation Focus Group

Date **11/3/10**

Time **6:00 – 8:00 PM**

Location **Highlands Neighborhood Center**

Agenda

6:00 pm – 6:15 pm

Welcome and Introductions

6:15 pm – 6:20 pm

Planning Process

6:20 pm – 7:40 pm

Group Discussion

- Fields/Facilities
- Emerging Sports
- City's Role

7:40 pm – 7:55 pm

Final Thoughts

7:55 pm – 8:00 pm

Next Steps and Follow-Up

Please feel free to write additional comments on this agenda and leave with the facilitator

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Discussion Questions

1. How would you define a successful Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Natural Resources Plan? What should the Plan do for the City?
2. How does field scheduling work in this community? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this system?
3. How would you describe the condition of sports facilities in this community?
4. What resources outside of the city is your organization utilizing?
5. What sports/activities do you see emerging as new or growing field users?
6. What should the City's role be in outdoor organized athletics?
7. Keeping our discussion in mind, do you have any final thoughts to share?

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Organized Outdoor Active Recreation Questionnaire

1. Name of Organization: _____
2. Name of person filling out form: _____
3. Contact Information (Email, phone): _____
4. Geographical Boundary: _____
(example: School District, city limits)
5. Percent of participants living within Renton: _____
6. Season(s) playing: _____
7. Number of Teams: _____
8. Players per team: _____
9. Games played per week/team: _____
10. Practices per week/team: _____
11. Locations used: _____

12. Number of time slots scheduled per field/gym per day:
(example: 3 time slots 4:00, 5:30, 7:00 pm)

*Please return this questionnaire to Margie Beitner
via email: Mbeitner@Rentonwa.gov, fax 425-430-6603, in person
to Community Services at City Hall 6th Floor (1055 South Grady
Way; Renton, WA 98057)
or the Focus Group meeting on 11/3.*

Please add any additional comments on the back of this form.

**Organized Outdoor Active Recreation Focus Group Meeting Invite List
Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Natural Resources Plan**

**Highlands Neighborhood Center
Multi-Purpose Room
(800 Edmonds Avenue NE, Renton, WA)**

Wednesday, November 3, 2010, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

1. Adult Soccer

Co-Rec. Soccer Association (Mark Bishop)
Washington State Women's Soccer (Phoebe Russell)
UK International Soccer Camps (Stewart Boniface)
Greater Seattle Soccer League (Kelly Madigan)

2. Youth Soccer

Greater Renton Junior Soccer Association (G.R.J.S.A.) (Garrett Abel, President)
Greater Renton Junior Soccer Association (G.R.J.S.A.) (Rich Turner)
Greater Renton Football Club (GRFC) (Rich Turner)
Cascade Soccer Club (Mike Thompson, President)
Highlands Soccer Club (Gerry Kaiser, President)
TUSK (Scott Elston, President)
S.C.O.R.E. (Larry Sullivan, President)
St. Anthony CYO (Kevin Masterson, Soccer Coordinator)

3. Youth Football

Renton Rangers (Shimika Dowlen, President)
Benson Bruins Football (Kevin Kinsey, President and Tony Heimann, Athletic Director)

4. Adult Softball/Baseball

Emerald City Softball Association
Renton Christian Softball League (Herm Linsley)
CSSA/Clean and Sober Softball Association
PACCAR Softball League (Jay Dorney)
Senior Fastpitch Softball League (Charlie Bendock)
WSDOT Softball League (Jack Bighorse)
PSSBL-Adult Baseball (Philip Schrock)

5. Youth Baseball/Softball/T-Ball

Renton Little League (Chris Hanis, President)
CVAC-Cascade Vista Athletic Club (Lonnie G. King, President)
Newcastle Baseball (Jonathan Maltos, President)
Five Star (Cyndee Settle, Vice President)

6. Rugby

Liberty Rugby (Jeff Chandler)

OPSB RUGBY (Eric Nelson)

7. Cricket

American Recreation Cricket Club (Iliyas Mohammad)

8. Misc. Sport Field Use

Liga Hispana del Noroeste (Victor Hernandez)

Renton Christian School (Tony Lambert)

Renton School District (Brian Kaelin and Lisa Holliday)

City Staff Attending:

Shirley Anderson, Recreation Supervisor

Leslie Betlach, Parks Planning and Natural Resources Director

Kelly Beymer, Parks and Golf Course Director

Todd Black, Capital Project Coordinator

Vanessa Dolbee, Community and Economic Development/Acting Senior Planner

Donna Eken, Recreation Coordinator

Shawn Fenn, Recreation Systems Technician

Andy O'Brien, Recreation Supervisor

Peter Renner, Facilities Director

Kristine Stimpson, Recreation Manager

Tim Williams, Recreation Director