

Seattle Parks and Recreation maintains over 1,500 acres of land classified as natural areas and greenbelts, park sites that have been established for accessing forests and shorelines, connecting neighborhoods with trails and greenways, providing low-impact recreational opportunities in a dense urban environment, and practicing sustainable forest and habitat restoration. To create a vision for natural areas and greenbelts that will maintain the native forest ecosystem, protect public safety and enhance positive uses over the long term, Seattle Parks is seeking to develop values-based guidelines for their use.

As part of the process for developing these guidelines, Parks provided a variety of opportunities for people to learn about natural areas and greenbelts and share input on how these precious resources should and should not be used.

The last of these opportunities, hosted on April 4, 2015, at Seattle Center's Armory Building, was a "mini-summit": an open house event that included display boards, a presentation, a panel discussion among five subject matter experts representing a variety of viewpoints who discussed action items to ensure the health and vitality of natural areas and greenbelts, and 31 information tables sponsored by organizations doing work relevant to Parks'.

Members of the public were encouraged to submit comments in writing at the event. This document summarizes key themes that emerged in the 27 comments received. Transcribed comments are provided as an appendix, as are notes from the panel discussion.

Comment Highlights

The comment form available at the mini-summit, provided as Appendix I, posed specific questions, each of which is listed below, along with a summary of response themes.

1. Please supply two words that embody what you value about natural areas and greenbelts

- Respondents stressed the myriad benefits of access to nature (e.g., beauty, connection, quiet, respite from city, psychological and physical well-being, education, etc.)
- Preservation and stewardship were also repeatedly mentioned as an important value
- Several mentioned the opportunity for recreation and exercise

The graphic below illustrates answers to this question, giving most prominence to words most frequently used.



2. Parks is seeking to develop use guidelines for Seattle Parks' classified Natural Areas and Greenbelts that *maintain the native forest ecosystem, protect public safety and enhance positive uses over the long-term*. Tell us which of these goals should be considered and how they should be emphasized.

- i. Ensure accessibility for all
- ii. Restore wildlife habitat and forest health
- iii. Improve public safety
- iv. Increase low-intensity recreation opportunities
- v. Provide opportunities to enjoy peace and quiet
- vi. Purchase land for Natural Areas and Greenbelts

- vii. Provide increased opportunities for Parks users to participate in the care and maintenance of Natural Areas and Greenbelts
- viii. Increase education and awareness

- The top two goals, each chosen by 9 respondents, were “Purchase land for Natural Areas and Greenbelts” and “Increase education and awareness.”
- Goals also highly ranked, each chosen by 8 respondents, were “Restore wildlife habitat and forest health” and “Provide increased opportunities for Parks users to participate in the care and maintenance of Natural Areas and Greenbelts.”
- The topic of low-intensity recreation drew diverse comments. Some commenters opposed any form of biking as a recreational opportunity; most of these stated that walking should be the only form of recreation. Others supported mountain biking, saying that it was possible to provide opportunities for all, and that all goals were compatible.

3. How would we measure success? For example, if you said improving public safety was an important goal, what would be a measure that public safety had been improved?

- Regarding accessibility for all:
 - Percentage of public land accessible (not privately used)
 - Increased usage
 - Safety and functionality of connections
 - Clear wayfinding
 - Trail accessibility, including steps/stairs
- Regarding public safety:
 - Reduced rat habitats (which improves health and public safety)
 - Fewer homeless encampments
 - Reduced crime (work with Seattle Police Department for crime statistics)
 - Increased use by families and children (i.e., monitor user demographics and behaviors)
- Regarding restoring wildlife habitat and forest health:
 - Number of species observed in parks (add biologist to staff)
 - Status of wildlife (use Audubon and University resources to evaluate), plant life, soil and wetlands
 - Decreased invasives
- Regarding opportunities for parks users to participate in the care and maintenance of natural areas and greenbelts:
 - Number of people caring for greenbelts and using them
 - Number of volunteer hours, especially among youth (indicates engagement and long-term stewardship investment)
- Regarding education and awareness:
 - Increased signage along trails

4. As Seattle Parks develops supplemental use guidelines for these areas, how should they balance the growing need and demand for creating recreational opportunities in natural areas and greenbelts with protecting natural resources?

- “Balance” is wrong mindset. Recreational opportunities should not be considered in natural areas.
- Recreational use connects people to these lands, promotes stewardship. Should be allowed, but develop trails and paths to direct users.
- Clean up Duwamish salmon habitat to expand recreational opportunities and address social justice
- With limited natural areas, focus should be kept on managing the environment and invasive plants.
- Purchase more land

5. Seattle's population is expected to increase by 120,000 more people by the year 2035. What unique educational and recreational opportunities do natural areas and greenbelts provide in a dense urban setting?

- Opportunity to learn about and connect with nature, especially for youth
- Opportunity to promote environmental awareness
- Opportunity to find refuge from urban density and as a consequence live more happily with it
- Opportunity to reflect and meditate
- Opportunity for respite, quiet, tranquility
- Opportunity for exercise (running, walking)
- Opportunity to breathe clean air
- Opportunity for birdwatching
- Opportunity for hiking
- Opportunity for study of flora and fauna, classroom visits

4. As Seattle Parks develops supplemental use guidelines for these areas, how should they balance the growing need and demand for creating recreational opportunities in natural areas and greenbelts with protecting natural resources?

5. Seattle's population is expected to increase by 120,000 more people by the year 2035. What unique educational and recreational opportunities do natural areas and greenbelts provide in a dense urban setting?

Thank you for your interest in the Seattle Parks Natural Area and Greenbelt Supplemental Use Guidelines. Please submit this form in the comment box at the sign-in table or scan and email to Susanne.rockwell@seattle.gov or mail to: Susanne Rockwell, Seattle Parks and Recreation, 100 Dexter Avenue North, Seattle, WA 98109

Appendix II: Mini-Summit Written Comments (Transcribed¹)

1. Give us one or two words that embody what you value about natural areas and greenbelts

- Natural beauty
- Psycho/spiritual/physical restorations
- Preservation/Stewardship – Natural areas free of human intrusion
- The natural ecosystems we can preserve (restore?) and the community we can build in caring for them.
- Recreation. Running and Biking.
- Urban opportunity for stewardship and recreation.
- Public access to public space
- Natural environment
- Ecosystem services, checks and balances, cleaner air and water birds!
- Access & habitat to nature. Respite from crazy city, habitat for healthy people and animals.
- Preservation and protection of natural areas.
- Preservation
- Beauty – nature close to me and accessible without having to drive.
- My psychological well-being (and other people's)
- Sustainability; garden with native plants.
- Positive connection between humans and nature.
- Work out
- Unfettered nature
- Tranquility
- Urban respite for natural areas. Greenbelts have a different connotation.
- Another world away and another pace – peaceful, without fast action, quiet.
- Education thru access!
- Engagement and education

¹ Highlights denote illegible text in original handwritten comment

2. Parks is seeking to develop use guidelines for Seattle Parks' classified Natural Areas and Greenbelts that maintain the native forest ecosystem, protect public safety and enhance positive uses over the long-term. Tell us which of these goals should be considered and how they should be emphasized.

- i. Ensure accessibility for all (06)*
- ii. Restore wildlife habitat and forest health (08)*
- iii. Improve public safety (04)*
- iv. Increase low-intensity recreation opportunities (05)*
- v. Provide opportunities to enjoy peace and quiet (05)*
- vi. Purchase land for Natural Areas and Greenbelts (09)*
- vii. Provide increased opportunities for Parks users to participate in the care and maintenance of Natural Areas and Greenbelts (08)*
- viii. Increase education and awareness (09)*

- All items are important (i) implies and safe and secure environment. To make green spaces safe and accessible all use must be legal and regulations must be enforced. Camping and off leash dogs are a problem at Lawton Park. Last year a camper lived in the park for more than a month a few hundred yards from Lawton Elementary School. Many calls and emails did not change the slow, choppy response to the encampment. Dog owners continue to use Lawton Park as an off leash area despite an off leash area at Manor Park a few blocks away. They leave dog poop on the ground contaminating the soil and watershed. So ENFORCEMENT of existing regulations relies on adequate staff to work in the park environment and for parks properties.
- (1) ii restore wildlife habitat and ? health – these are critical to the forest. 2) v. Provide opportunities to enjoy peace and quiet. This is needs more ? as our city becomes more crowded. ? people will have to travel ? them. They also provide psych social well-being in many ways. 3) Purchase land – we ? – more people = more need. 4) Need to include “? Manage as natural areas” as well as greenbelts and classified natural areas.
- Racing mountain bikes are not low intensity. Use does not mean sports in the natural areas. Wildness is very useful. Read “Last Child in the Woods” to learn about the benefits of being in wild nature for mental health. Rapid population growth makes leaving the wild areas for passive use even more critical. Perimeter trails around the larger natural areas for walking area a good idea to improve access for quiet walking and experiencing wonder of forest and wetlands. Education opportunities should be a top priority for Parks Resources starting with preschool children. Classes a low cost to take children to explore a natural areas to explore. If you are introduced early, it stays with you. This I know that need to be protected for quiet use of wild places: Dead (?), North Beach, Handover Woods, West Duwamish Green Belt, Westerrest Park, Schmidtz Park, North Acres, Kiwanis Ravine, and others I don't know.
- Missing goal: Preservation of the character and function of natural areas. The word “care” might be substituted for the word “use” in the term “use guidelines.” As to the goals offered: what mechanical component of a car is most important? Brakes? Steering wheel? Key? Etc. The question is worded in such a way that “Hobson’s Choice” is forced on respondent. Of course all goals should be considered in a holistic manner and that takes wise gutsy leadership and managers who have the strength of character to resist single interest pressure groups.

- (ii) continue GSP programs for stewardship, have GSP take a more active role in coordinating and advising of new stewards when several work in a large natural area, more help in providing signage/barriers to newly planted areas so dogs and children/youth don't trample over and destroy restored areas. Plant more trees and get people to stop cutting trees! Take stranger dancer action against violators on public lands (ie BPNA). (vi) Have a well publicized program so homeowners in areas where natural areas could be expanded if purchased, know about options to sell to Parks or SPU! AND use funds from Metropolitan Park District to purchase more land to convert to green belts and natural areas. Plant more trees, especially conifers, in non-natural areas like Hubbard Park.
- (i) invite new user groups who will steward land and enjoy recreation opportunity. (ii) This will only be accomplished with a dedicated volunteer base. (iii) lands infused with positive behavior will improve safety as negative and illicit behaviors will no longer be welcome. (iv) seek out opportunities for this! Access + recreation = stewardship. (v) sure – some of the places should! Others should provide community recreation trails and opportunities to recreate – wellness.
- Acquire the WSDOT peninsula. Put it on the “classified” natural areas and greenbelt char. This is unique wetlands. Irreplaceable. A critical part of the ecosystem. Start reserving money for it. Put it on maps and charts and mark it on the Comprehensive Plan as such. Republish Olmstead (?) showing it as Arboretum.
- Prioritize restoration, and invasive seed source control, before recreational concerns, otherwise regional recreation will be ivy and holly forests! After that, every interest group needs an outlet, so encourage active themes in same areas, walking themes in others. For example, bike trails in Westcrest would discourage litter of illicit uses.
- How can you choose? All good but especially I, ii,vii,viii.
- NO to “increase low-intensity recreation opportunities”
- Keep mountain bikes, zip lines, etc. out of greenbelts – use for stewardship, environmental education, walking only.
- Greenbelts are surrounded by people and therefore should be accessible and usable. If we want people to care about their areas we have to educate them and have them want to take care of their areas. Adding other things besides a hiking trail might make our young people participate (ie biking). Definitely need to educate people on what a healthy forest looks like. We all drive by and see tress but do not realize that forest is possibly dying.
- Educate and limit what is planted in our parks and new invasives have been established in my local park due to the actions of well meaning but ignorant group. Supervise active group and require they have a baseline of knowledge about sustaining biodiversity and its huge value to the future quality of life. What if EVERYONE read Douglas Tallmay's “Bringing Nature Home.” It could be a start.
- The best management doesn't pit these values against each other they optimize for multiple values.
- Improve muscle powered sports – mountain biking, running & walking.

- (1) Restore habitat, (2) Peace & quiet
- Restore wildlife habitat & forest health. Purchase land. For access – need to remember that studies show people get benefits for just visiting green areas only ? so they don't need to go across all areas or ? them. from just PAGE 39
- (ii) wildlife habitat & forest health. (i) accessibility for some would be limited by visiting the natural trails. Perhaps viewing platforms, limited boardwalk. (iii) some invasives actually are habitats. (iv) mountain biking, ziplines, frisbee toss – inappropriate!! (v) trails what they do now! (vi) yes! (vii) Yes, but not as a trade off for inappropriate uses. (viii) sure, not on mountain bikes – let them walk in or go to a developed park.
- “increase low-intensity recreation” = walking, environmental education. That many N/A, G/B are ECA's for erosion and landslides has not been discussed here. Before and above all lives, property, and infrastructure as well as the integrity of any NA ought be cherished and upheld. Do the homework; do the geotech, do the real reconnaissances. If a slide results from activities, habitat, the land, lives, property can be lost. The poor and homeless will always be with us. Don't criminalize or discard as trash the homeless. Help them. People have always had sex in parks since the beginning of time and always will – maybe more in Volunteer Park even than others – and VP is a very “active, “ peopled park. People shoot drugs everywhere; changing NA use will not stop that. \
- Engage young people. Mountain bikes in some areas will bring interest and involvement.
- Many of these uses are fully compatible. We can have mountain bike trails AND nooks for peace and quiet. We have to layer use just as the forest layers are ecological niche on top of another. Maximize energy.

3. How would we measure success? For example, if you said improving public safety was an important goal, what would be a measure that public safety had been improved?

- # of species observed in parks (birds) – we need a biologist on staff. Percentage of public property actually accessible, not privately used. Diversity of investment – not concentration of funding at Manor Park is getting \$400,000 to improve trails Lawton Park \$0.
- 1) For quality of area use four ? & scientific motives - ? also use neighbor? data. 2) Need to also audit and input list of all natural areas, greenbelts & areas natural areas as major total area and a quality ?. 3) Social science survey study of how ?
- Study the full spectrum of wildlife in the areas. Then you will be able to learn the impact by taking another careful look. Only way to know if use is “low impact”. Make use of Audubon, University resources, and others to develop this information.
- Re: natural area and successful preservation. Annual surveys of plant life/health/variety and other species health e.g. migrating bears/fowl in order to identify if natural areas are

maintaining natural progression and continuous health or is degradation evident in order to allocate appropriate resources to properly steward these unique areas.

- Few encampments in our natural areas (can Parks Dept & Police work more closely with WA Human Service Organizations). Less drug use, fewer dogs off leash defecating or attacking users. Better oversight on where trees and shrubs get planted to prevent ambush and provide safer passage through natural areas. More help in providing safe, accessible trails including steps/stairs. Note: Users and neighbors don't always know their choice use of an open space may be destroying an ecosystem. Some scientific approach and research needs to be part of the process along with public engagement.
- More usage of open space
- Work with SPD and crime stats – have they decreased? Work with homeless organizations – are there encampments? Track the positive behaviors and issues – how many youth and children are present? How many 9 year old girls are using the space? Ones that attract that demographic have been proven safe places.
- Access is measured by evaluating how connected Point A is to Point B. How safe, walking are the connections? Is there clear way finding? Public safety is evaluated by crime statistics and positively activated space?
- Acquire the WSDOT Peninsula for arboretum purposes.
- Health is part of public safety, and the reduction of rat habitat could be measured by counting rats!!
- More people spending time in forest, less people scared to be there. Where there are trails provide plenty of connections for easy exit. Signage.
- Preserve, protect and increase natural areas.
- Does a proposal destroy soil stature, wildlife, wetlands, land contour?
- People caring for the greenbelts and using them.
- Have wildlife. Have open spaces in a crowded city.
- The invasive burden would decrease. Document change of vegetation.
- Amount of trails and use data.
- Track via monitoring. Audit periodically status and amount of all public land in greenbelts, natural areas and quasi managed as natural area and their quality. And use these as management targets against to access accountability.

- Counts as habitat – birds, mammal, bees, etc. Forest health – tree health, soil stability, invasive species count.
- The presence of families with children. Positive behavior displaces negative.
- Volunteer hours are a great measure of successful engagement. Seeing increased volunteerism, especially among youth, indicates engagement and long-term stewardship investment.

4. As Seattle Parks develops supplemental use guidelines for these areas, how should they balance the growing need and demand for creating recreational opportunities in natural areas and greenbelts with protecting natural resources?

- With an eye to income equality – trails that are safe for walking can't accommodate expensive bikes with all the incumbent gear. Also, children and the elderly greatly enjoy safe accessible trails. Keeping public land accessible unencumbered by private use.
- 1) avoid and minimize fragmentation. 2) minimize footprint of trash/structures, etc. 3) Allow refuge areas by creating distinct avoiding trajectory flight intention or stress intention. 4) when ? 5) may need additional protection nesting season. 6) Avoid trampling vegetation. 7) Retain ? for quiet enjoyment.
- First: Identify natural areas and delineate them in legal (GIS) fashion. Second: "Balance" is the wrong mindset to apply to natural areas. Balance can only be applied to open space use that is distinct from natural areas. There should be no recreational opportunities in natural areas. Humans are the most damaging or "invasive species."
- If we are going to have trails, develop them so people stay on them...planting closer to and along trails and putting up rails in other sections. If a site is large enough to accommodate passive use like hiking, picnicking, and biking, also set aside space where just aquatic, birds and mammals can be undisturbed, especially if species like herons or owls are present. If a site is not large enough, favor habitat that provides undisturbed space for wildlife with only walking trails.
- There is nothing natural left in Seattle. It is a managed environment. Focus should be on recreation and controlling speed of invasives.
- The natural resources will be protected in so much as their (*just ended abruptly*)
- Untended greenspaces are not natural areas – they're dumping grounds
- The area is mostly protected by covenants between WSDOT and US. Preserving the rest just involves regular maintenance as done now.
- Use recreation opportunities: Access as way to connect people to these lands and create new stewards to care for it. Not an either/or situation. Connecting people, especially kids to these places.

- Not all greenbelts are the same but I do think some can be used for mountain bike trails and hiking trails. Would need to monitor each greenbelt individually as to what would work best.
- Recreational opportunities other than walking, bird watching and nature studies education should be elsewhere. Not in natural open space area.
- Good trail design and avoiding some areas.
- Need to avoid degradation and maintain sustainability. Avoid fragmentation of existing ? spaces & enhance by eliminating, reducing, social trails and social intrusions. Need to maintain ability for public to free tranquil space which is needed for personal restoration, stress reduction, etc.
- No supplemental uses!
- Purchase more land. Protect what we have. I think this statement from the presentation is flawed – “Stronger access and exposure to our environment is needed in order to build a sense of responsibility and promote stewardship of these lands with the next generation” in respect to 120,000 + in 20 years. With that many people arriving, there will be plenty of people willing to participate in restorations continuing efforts. The volunteers are expanding; the land is not. Therefore, first and foremost, treasure, respect, honor and preserve the land – from invasive people and activities, from overuse, from opening too many doors. Gentle please. Gently proceed. Also, population is aging. Any activities allowed should take that into account.
- I mentioned kiln dust, permitted by Parks to be dumped into the Duwamish Greenbelt. The point is – the Duwamish Tribe is the most oppressed social justice group. Cleaning up salmon habitat would expand recreational opportunities and address social justice. Treaty obligation are our FIRST PRIORITY.
- By increasing engagement and education opportunities in our urban forests we increase awareness and stewardship for natural resources on a lifelong, global level. We need to invest in our long-term future and that means we need to create ways for kids to love nature so they are vested in protection and sustainability over the long haul. Mountain bikes are one way to engage youth. Moreover, restoring and expanding access for our local forests reduces the environmental costs of nature lovers driving to rural forests. Huge environmental gains!

5. Seattle's population is expected to increase by 120,000 more people by the year 2035. What unique educational and recreational opportunities do natural areas and greenbelts provide in a dense urban setting?

- Natural beauty – keep it “less built”. Education – teach our youth about nature. Habitat for birds, insects – watching and learning. Exercise, relaxation. Community engagement, meetings. ART drawing painting poem writing.

- 1) education at all sites – school study on up? 2) Tours. 3) ID tags and interpretive signage. 4) walking maps with educational info.
- First: The question should be split to address “natural areas” and the general term “greenbelts” off for separate discussions. Second: Natural areas should be woven into all promotional literature the chamber of commerce produces; into school curriculum at all levels.
- Sorry – I don’t really think of natural areas as recreation spaces first...I think of them as wildlife preserves and plant preserves with opportunities (maybe we should have more guided walks by naturalists?) to learn about and appreciate the other life forms on our planet. Guidelines should be posted at all natural areas on how to use them and acceptable activities (hiking, birdwatching, dogs on leash only, etc)
- Opportunity to recreate without leaving the City! Opportunity to be in nature! Opportunity to practice stewardship!
- Educational opportunities are endless: ethnobotany, habitat preservation, water cycle, ect. Recreational opportunities will depend on the location and conditions on site.
- An opportunity to commune with nature, reflect and meditate.
- Partnerships with local community organizations to help with environmental coalition.
- It keeps us close to nature and not living in a concrete bubble. For some children growing up in a urban setting it will be the only green they will probably see before the grow up.
- Walking. Learning about the natural world. Breathing clean air.
- A place to run, ride and walk without having to drive.
- Class visits and study. Class projects. Higher natural studies and papers. Interpretive signage and plant id tags but low cost. (?) Trail maps with notes on natural history, ect.?. Tours. Bus/walking tours - ?
- Respect for nature
- Respite, quiet, another pace.
- Just allowing youth to be in the forest is the first step. The recreation would be appropriate to the particular green belt.
- We had better account for the increase in sewage from people & dogs, i.e., there’s no porto-potty at Fauntleroy PK’s 30 acres. Thanks!

- It is by having healthy and accessible natural areas IN the city, that we support the urban density that will reduce environmental degradation in the suburbs and rural areas. High quality urban nature (+) high-density urban living = a healthy, happy population that doesn't add to urban sprawl and does support global environmental sustainability.

Additional feedback:

- Why is Parks not replacing the naturalist position that works with schools?
- Where is critique form for this forum? And for the mindmixer enterprise?

DRAFT

Appendix III – Mini-Summit Panel Discussion Notes

Panelists:

- **Merica Whitehall** - Executive Director, Nature Consortium
- **Mark Jordan** - Professor of Biology, Seattle University– (specialist in habitat analysis)
- **Peg Staeheli** - Hydrologist, SvR Design; former Urban Forestry Commissioner
- **John Barber** - Parks and open space advocate; former member, Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
- **Marty Westerman** - Board Member, Seattle Green Spaces Coalition

1. *Seattle's population is expected to increase by 120,000 people over the next 20 years. Seattle Parks and Recreation needs to continue to provide recreation opportunities for our changing population while also providing opportunities to contemplate and build community, and to preserve and enhance forest habitat, tree canopy and water quality. Stronger access and exposure to our environment is needed in order to build a sense of responsibility and promote stewardship of these lands with the next generation.*

- **(John Barber)** The next 20 years is essence of being a forest steward. Have to think long term and understand the amount of area dedicated to natural areas in our city. We are not doing well (65th) for acres per citizen. Need to think about acquiring more areas. Create wildlife corridors to connect neighborhoods. Need to protect core values and benefits – destinations and places for walking, participate in restoration, experience of nature, and learn about nature. Need to address society's need to get outdoors from a health and stress reduction perspective. Seattle residents want parks and love nature and love volunteering. 18,000 volunteer hours (much higher than community centers).
- **(Merica Whitehall)** Importance of greenspaces to creating community and well-being through access to nature. Opportunities for neighbors to connect. Values: sustainability, social justice, citizenship. Sustainability: global issue, natural areas being devastated by development. Here, as population grows, Seattle is becoming a global city; we have an opportunity to engage new citizens to create future stewards. Who's next to take care of natural areas? Have to engage young people. Seattle is diverse so there are many different perspectives about nature. Have to preserve it. Incoming and native people have different ways they interact with nature. Need to engage youth in a way that they want to care for and maintain greenspaces. Not much ethnic diversity in this room. How do we change that?
- **(Mark Jordan)** Natural areas are great places to instill love of nature in a local area. Natural areas are a living laboratory: what species are present and what habitat characteristics correlate with those species. How do we accommodate growth without turning natural areas into isolated areas? Need to find ways to promote stewardship and have to talk about it in an urban area. Can't give up on cities as places for natural spaces just because they are intensely developed.

- **(Peg Staeheli)** Cities can look like wastelands when you first enter them and then as you dial down you can see natural areas. Need to imagine what can be possible and have more access to natural areas because as it is now access is not easy. Getting access the first time is hard but once you provide that you win people over. Need to look for opportunities that bring joy, are repeatable, and promote restoration; better funding can also help to get back to a sense of responsibility.
 - **(Marty Westerman)** The public owns these lands. Green areas provide air, carbon sink, property values enhancement, and these are quantifiable things that have value. These are not “pretend” nature values as many developers think. Park lands are worth over half billion and that is real. These assets don’t appear in city council budgets and they should. Should expand natural areas as population increases. Giving natural areas a dollar value is a way to push back against those who want it for their specific use (development). Keep land in public hands and establish sense of responsibility amongst our leaders. Need them to set example for everyone in city. Need to know leaders value our public spaces.
2. *How can reforestation strategy help pollinators?*
- **(Mark Jordan)** Pollinator pathway in Central District. Has to take place throughout urban landscape not just natural areas.
 - **(Peg Staeheli)** Wildlife comes back when plants come back. Have to chip away at invasives. Has to be balance in every area from grass to plants, not just grass.
 - **(John Barber)** Diversity in plant palette is more important than unity.
3. *What has greatest net environmental impact, access to urban nature or restricting access and for young people so that they have to drive to it?*
- **(John Barber)** Have to have access, and think about accessing it from public transit. Every area in city should have access to natural areas within walking distance.
 - **(Merica Whitehall)** We are using more resources than the planet can sustain. We are spending our natural resources. By not caring for environment we are endangering our existence. Competition for resources – should people be able to get into areas easily or have to travel for them? Need to engage citizens to foster ability to steward.
4. *What have been most effective ways to stop or curtail negative human activities occurring in our greenspaces?*
- **(Marty Westerman)** Community engagement; the more you get people involved volunteering and clearing brush, folks are not going to do negative things. Negative people are not going to get out there if there are people out there doing good things. **(John Barber)** Go door to door to get people involved, but this is difficult in a dense urban environment. But community engagement and use are key elements.
 - **(Marty Westerman)** Engage police. Lack of productive activities for all people to engage in. Lot of issues beyond parks that affect parks.

- **(Peg Staeheli)** If we don't restore areas and make them welcoming we won't have access for normal people. Need visibility and access. Negative activity will occur wherever we but can't abandon natural areas just because some negative things happen in them.
5. *How can volunteer forest stewards best advocate Parks for more greenbelts and natural areas?*
- **(Marty Westerman)** Keep on elected officials and Parks staff; engagement is key. Public mass – petitions, hearings, telephone. Conduct private conversations with leaders with no pressure or scrutiny to converse and find out where win-wins exist. Keep away from creating adversarial relationships – need partnerships.
 - **(John Barber)** You don't have to go into woods to enjoy them. Pay attention to edges – paths, short bursts of nature “parlors.” Make sure trail entrances are more welcoming; they should be a celebration of nature.
 - **(Merica Whitehall)** Partnerships. Don't wait for government to solve problems. Citizens, volunteers and non-profits do what government can't or won't do. Parks has constraints that we have to understand. It's great to see all these different people here with similar values. Opportunity to partner with each other.
 - **(Mark Jordan)** There have been great successes and progress and we need to talk those up.
 - **(Peg Staeheli)** We are a data driven society and we need to measure value. That measurement needs to happen.
6. *Low impact is defined in the current policy. How can low impact be implemented?*
- **(John Barber)** Low impact activity is activity that does not interfere with quiet enjoyment of nature.
 - **(Peg Staeheli)** There is lots of research available that provided a robust definition.
7. *What do leaders mean when they say “stronger access to parks”?*
- **(Marty Westerman)** Stronger is hard to define. More? Ability to drive in? More availability could be one definition. Accessibility study: SE area of city has more natural areas but it is more economically challenged. NW area has fewer areas but more access to resources are available to them because the area is stronger economically. Providing better access to resources would be “stronger” access.
 - **(Peg Staeheli)** Availability – obvious entries.
 - **(Merica Whitehall)** Continue to engage and promote engagement. Parks are for the entire city. All voices have to be included.
 - **(John Barber)** The great length of shoreline we have in our city is one of our strengths. We need to create greenways along the shorelines that connect street ends. That would open up access and areas to the public.

8. *We are facing slow motion invasive problem. Should city put priority on killing these rather than recreation?*
- **(Peg Staeheli)** It would be great if we could have one day where everyone across the city picks ivy.
 - **(Marty Westerman)** Engagement. We are the third ranked city for public engagement. We know how to solve problems. The City could purchase trees and people would plant them.
 - **(Peg Staeheli)** Picking ivy feels good but some of it needs to be hired out to ensure it gets done. We could do a Kickstarter to fund green jobs and get it going.
 - **(John Barber)** Some areas never really get cleared. There is always more; need to eliminate seed sources. We need the Mayor to declare that ivy is illegal.
9. *How can we prevent or mitigate the creation and use of social/informal trails in greenspaces?*
- **(John Barber)** Parks does not have a strategy for this. We need to discourage people away from steep and sensitive areas. We need to communicate about this.
 - **(Merica Whitehall)** Create connection to natural environment so people do care and value natural areas, and know what is acceptable behavior and what is not. That mindset informs how we engage with one another. Can't legislate or issues citations; need to create value and care. Make people aware.
 - **(Marty Westerman)** Balance between laying out paths and laying out paths where people really go.
 - **(Peg Staeheli)** There are examples from other cities of good signage that politely say what you want people to do rather than what you don't want them to do. We are rightfully afraid of signs and having too many; need to be more subtle.
10. *What kind of changes do you think are okay to authorize in natural areas (zipline, mountain biking)?*
- **(Marty Westerman)** In Lincoln Park people who wanted to create that attraction (zipline) didn't do their homework. The public did do their homework and showed up en masse. It's hard to control human behavior; have to create a corral that allows for any behavior that doesn't cause harm. Have to do homework; create other space for activities. Parks can be the wrong space to do some activities.
 - **(Peg Staeheli)** Access is important but access should be varied. Need to make choices and be transparent. Access can be provided in various ways.
 - **(Mark Jordan)** We need a good definition of harm and look at what harm may be done by specific activities.
 - **(John Barber)** Always ask neighbors first; open process to everyone about what to do with land but those who live closest need to be emphasized. There are other ways to accomplish the goal of having different activities. Find areas that work for those activities. How do we and the Parks Department decide what is appropriate recreational use in natural areas?

- **(Mark Jordan)** We have to look at if these changes harm wildlife.
- **(Peg Staeheli)** We can't draw a line around natural areas and place more importance on those who live nearest. We are one city and all areas belong to all of us.

Wrap up

- **(John Barber)** Urban foresters should be talking about what's next. What's working well and what we can do better.
- **(Merica Whitehall)** Parks belong to all of us – we are global city that is diverse. The challenge is to come to agreement about what is right and wrong. We can all win even if we can't get everything we want. Increase engagement and participation; these areas are important to our well-being. We are fortunate to have what we have; focus on that rather than what divides us.
- **(Mark Jordan)** Democracy can be a challenge but it is a great way to get things done. We need to find out way to engage all people.
- **(Peg Staeheli)** Thank you for caring.
- **(Marty Westerman)** Push on Parks, city council, and the mayor. Can't let ourselves be squeezed on greenspace; we need to expand it and make it more abundant. How do we do that?