

# Renew the Legacy... Fulfill the Vision

Renton Parks, Recreation, Open Space  
and Natural Resources Plan



## Focus Group Summaries-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](http://www.rentonwa.gov) and click on "Renew the Legacy... Fulfill the Vision"

## Recreation Service Providers Focus Group Meeting

Date 11/4/10

Time 8:30 – 10:30 AM

Location Renton Community Center, Classroom A

---

**Community Services Administrator:** Terry Higashiyama

**Team Leads:** Leslie Betlach, Vanessa Dolbee

**Participants:** Steven Beck, Kim Blakeley, Sharon Claussen, Lori Hogan, Joe Lamborn, Judy Smith, Rick Still, Rick Stracke

**City Staff Participating:** Karen Bergsvik, Shawn Daly, Jennifer Davis Hayes, Elizabeth Fast, Shawn Fenn, Debbie Little, Teresa Nishi, Andy O'Brien, Vincent (V.J.) Orduna, Tom Puthoff, Kristine Stimpson

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

---

This focus group was convened to discuss the existing efforts by City Community Services, as well as neighboring agencies, non-profit and for-profit providers of recreation services. The group also worked to identify gaps in services. The major points of the discussion are summarized below and a graphic record created during the discussion is presented on the next page.

The discussion began with some examples of what the City and community partners are successful in providing. Some of the programs called out for special mention included the Senior Center, Special Olympics Programs, the neighborhood centers and the partnership with the School District for aquatics programming. This discussion also included other organizations that are providing programming and facilities in and around Renton. The YMCA locations at Tukwila and Coal Creek in Newcastle bracket Renton and serve many residents. Valley Medical Center, based in Renton has partnered with the YMCA and participated in numerous special events, bringing free education and health screening to the community.

In discussing where gaps and challenges exist, concern about representing and serving the diverse community of Renton was one of the first issues raised. While the City has made efforts to reach out, participation in the recreation program does not reflect the many ethnic communities present in Renton. One idea discussed was the potential of rental facilities to bring in new people and raising awareness of the other programming available. Another idea is to provide targeted programming utilizing the contacts the City has in the community to draw people in.

Concern was expressed about the decline of youth programming due to budget constraints. The closure of the recreation buildings in parks has limited after school programming. The fee basis of much of the programming can also be barrier for many who need the services. Understanding the lack of resources, many emphasized the importance of partnerships with the School District and others to make the most out of the available facilities.

# Renton Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Natural Resources Plan

The group also considered how to tap into the expertise of the City in organizing and running programs to help community groups get off the ground and become sustainable. Volunteers and active community members represent considerable potential to expand programming in Renton. City staff could provide organizational and program consulting services or training workshops for community-based organizations to help build options that do not require an ongoing city staff presence.

Each invitee to the focus group was provided a brief questionnaire with a series of questions intended to identify the populations served by the represented programs, describe facility use and identify gaps and opportunities for partnerships. The findings from this questionnaire will be integrated into the analysis of community recreation programming needs.



## Recreation Service Providers Focus Group

### Wall Graphic Transcription

11/4/10

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].

#### CHALLENGES AND GAPS

- Transit
  - Kids 10-18yrs
- Scheduling pool facilities at the schools
- Pool design and treatment to accommodate diverse cultural needs [Treatments such as window coverings at pools to provide a sense of modesty]
- Education and outreach on childhood obesity and diabetes
- Creating/developing inclusive multi-cultural events and programming
  - Policies!
- Outreach to the 80+ cultural groups
- Identifying barriers to participation
- Losing programming in after school and evenings in partnership with the schools
- Terminology – Are persons 50+ identifying as being seniors?
  - Language and brand
- Park design needs to be versatile for multi-use
- Parents of teens are less willing to pay
- Fee based programs and equity of access
- Money for scholarships
- Need for free summer programs
- City only has outdoor pools
- Limited resources and maxed-out resources and facilities
  - Creates wait lists
- Arts center in coordination with other recreation programs
  - Gap in older kids and adult programs (15-55)
- [need a clearly defined] Vision: At the city [Recreation Division, Community Services Department] –
  - [Would have to be] Very broad statement to serve everyone

#### OPPORTUNITIES

- Kids are a conduit to the families
  - Increase sense of safety and community
- Spokespeople of various cultural groups [as points of contact]
- Underutilized indoor spaces
- Programming for youth, ethnicities and orientations
- Increased programming can help beat childhood obesity

## **Renton Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Natural Resources Plan**

- Partnerships – Public, private
- Instill leadership skills in kids through the programs
- Programs at housing complexes where the kids are safer
- Childcare – Regulatory system creates too many barriers
- Sports groups that lack funding and want to organize
  - City provides some technical support
- Serving everyone vs. specializing for the diversity of the community
  - Exposure and innovation
- City consult and advise groups that want to develop programs
  - Efficient use of resources!
- Community groups conducting programs have vision but lack skills to run
- Establishing an ongoing youth volunteering program
  - Schools have civic requirement
- Take programs out into the community
  - Expand on some of the existing outreach activities
- Inclusive evolution

### **OUTCOMES**

- Keep seniors independent and in homes
- Livable community – vibrant!
- Want people to be drawn to the city, stay and be connected
- Decrease barriers to access through transportation improvements
- Healthier community
  - Prevention vs. intervention
- Reducing barriers to engagement
- City and school district working together
- Benefit the most people using public money most efficiently
- Funding strategies
  - Support local economy with recreation!
- Increase diversity as part of the planning process
- Broad base marketing plan
- Innovation for new outcome
- Opportunities to try new things
- Opportunities for all income levels
- Intergenerational connections through programs
- Partnerships
  - City as consultant
- Building relationships
- Flexibility!

# Renew the Legacy... Fulfill the Vision

Renton Parks, Recreation, Open Space  
and Natural Resources Plan



## Recreation Service Providers Focus Group Meeting

Date **11/4/10**

Time **8:30 – 10:30 AM**

Location **Renton Community Center, Classroom A**

---

## Agenda

---

8:30 am – 8:45 am

**Welcome and Introductions**

8:45 am – 8:50 am

**Planning Process**

8:50 am – 10:10 am

**Group Discussion**

- Programs and populations
- Gaps in service
- Challenges and opportunities

10:10 am – 10:25 am

**Final Thoughts**

10:25 am – 10:30 am

**Next Steps and Follow-Up**

---

Please feel free to write additional comments here and leave with the facilitator

For more information visit [www.rentonwa.gov](http://www.rentonwa.gov) and click on  
Renew the Legacy...Fulfill the Vision

# Renew the Legacy... Fulfill the Vision

Renton Parks, Recreation, Open Space  
and Natural Resources Plan



## 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. What populations or needs are not currently being served by recreation programs in this part of King County?
3. What are the key challenges you face in providing programming in this region?
4. Keeping our discussion in mind, do you have any final thoughts to share?

For more information visit [www.rentonwa.gov](http://www.rentonwa.gov) and click on  
Renew the Legacy...Fulfill the Vision



3. *How many participants do you serve annually?*

4. *Please list the facilities your organization offers to the community. Are there ways we can partner to make better use of your facilities?*

5. *In your opinion, what are the primary needs of the population(s) you serve?*

6. *What are the primary gaps in service for the population(s) you serve?*

8. *How important are partnerships to your organization? Please check all that apply.*

- We have formal partnership arrangements.
- We have informal partnership arrangements.
- We partner if a special opportunity presents itself.
- We actively seek partners.
- We don't seek partners.
- Other (please explain).

9. *How can Renton Community Services partner with your organization/agency to meet the needs of the population you serve?*

*(a) What resources could your organization bring to a partnership?*

*(b) What resources would you most like to see Renton Community Services bring to a partnership?*

10. *What three parks, recreation, and open space improvements are most needed in Renton today? (Please list your choices. They do not have to be in priority order.)*

(1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

(3) \_\_\_\_\_

11. *Additional comments?*

***Please return this questionnaire to Margie Beitner via email: Mbeitner@Rentonwa.gov, fax 425-430-6603 or in person to Community Services at Renton City Hall, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor (1055 South Grady Way; Renton, WA 98057) or the Focus Group meeting on 11/4.***

**Recreation Provider Focus Group Meeting Invite List  
Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Natural Resources Plan**

**Renton Community Center, Classroom A**

(1715 SE Maple Valley Highway, Renton, WA)

**Thursday, November 4, 2010, 8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.**

1. City of Kent (Lydia Moorehead, Park Planner)
2. City of Tukwila (Rick Still, Parks and Recreation Director)
3. City of Newcastle (Michael Holly, Parks Program Manager)
4. King County Parks (Sharon Claussen, Program Manager)
5. YMCA/Coal Creek Family YMCA in Newcastle, WA (Judy Smith, Associate Executive)
6. YWCA – Regional Office
7. Boys & Girls Club (Dorina McHenry, Club Director)
8. Valley Medical Center (Kim Blakeley, Public Relations Manager/Public Information Officer)
9. Churches – REACH Co-chairs (Captain Terry Masango and Maggie McAdams)
10. Renton School District (Randy Matheson, Executive Director; Rick Stracke, Facilities Planning; and Joe Lamborn, Facilities and Operations Manager)
11. 24 Hr Fitness, Renton, WA (Tifani Keith, Club Manager)
12. Washington Interscholastic Activities Assoc. (WIAA) (Mike Colbrese)
13. Starfire Sports (Steven Beck, Owner)
14. Evergreen Ballet (Kevin Kaiser, Artistic Director)

**City Staff Attending:**

Leslie Betlach, Parks Planning and Natural Resources Director  
Karen Bergsvik, Human Services Manager  
Sean Claggett, Recreation Coordinator  
Shawn Daly, Recreation Supervisor (Senior Center)  
Vanessa Dolbee, Community and Economic Development/Acting Senior Planner  
Elizabeth Fast, Recreation Supervisor  
Debbie Little, Recreation Coordinator (Senior Center)  
Lisa McMartin, Lead Office Assistant (Renton Community Center)  
Teresa Nishi, Recreation Coordinator  
Vincent (V.J.) Orduna, Cultural Arts Coordinator (Carco Theatre)  
Tom Puthoff, Recreation Coordinator  
Kristine Stimpson, Recreation Manager  
Tim Williams, Recreation Director  
Jennifer Davis Hayes, Community Development Project Manager/CED