

Safety & Security + TAC Committee
June 5, 2024, 10 – 11 a.m.
David Douglas Room, World Forestry Center
Meeting Notes

Attending:

Keith Baich – Explore Washington Park (EWP)
Erin Bird – EWP
Kathy Goeddel – Arlington Heights Neighborhood Association (AHNA)
Jennifer Kent – World Forestry Center (WFC)
Rowan Lockett – Portland Japanese Garden (PJG)
Dennis McAfee - WFC
Heather McCarey – EWP
Adam Newman – PJG
Martain Nicholson – Portland Parks & Recreation (PPR)
Becky Schreiber – Hoyt Arboretum Friends (HAF)
Jason Sipe – PJG
Sean Sherrodd – Oregon Zoo (OZ)
Hallie Wilkerson - EWP

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss current shared needs around safety and security in Washington Park. There were two givens provided for context: the meeting is about shared needs, rather than individual partner needs; and the group will develop action items and responsibilities together.

The group brainstormed 5-7 behaviors that the participants have observed in the Park related to Safety and Security. The following behaviors were listed:

- Vehicle break-ins
- Erratic behavior, including both physical & mental crises
- Trespassing
- Vandalism
- Rage – around parking & restrooms
- Violence
- Domestic disputes
- Suspicious behavior
- Camping
- Lost equipment
- Animals in vehicles
- Pedestrian & bicycle safety
- Reckless driving
- Medical problems

The group agreed that vehicle break-ins and erratic behavior are the biggest concerns.

The group then discussed the impact of these behaviors. The impacts included:

- negative Park experience for both visitors and employees
- staff retention and morale

- Staff vehicles are regularly broken into
- Staff are worried to work during certain hours
- Staff get complaints from visitors for safety and security which they have no control over
- Managers have growing concerns and fears about keeping field staff safe
- Increased cost to venues
 - Field and evening staff are required to double up due to safety perceptions
 - Venues have hired additional security staff
 - Venue staff time is being used to address safety and security behaviors
- Negative public perception of the Park (or the threat of a negative perception)

The group then brainstormed “What do we need to address these behaviors.” The following ideas were provided:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increased response from Portland Street Response ● 2-way communication with Rangers ● Partner/Ranger communication tool ● Parking Enforcement Officer patrols ● Rangers dedicated to Washington Park ● Ranger role clarity ● Luggage check-in | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Restrooms, particularly in the southend ● Overnight security ● Signage tactics/plan about vehicle break-ins ● Partnership with TriMet ● Emergency call box ● Cameras ● Vehicle break-in plan |
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The group identified several needs as priorities:

- Two-way communication with partners, particularly the Park Rangers
 - The group expressed some concerns about using ranger dispatch including being told to call 311, being told rangers don't respond to vehicle break-ins, or not getting a response
- Rangers who are dedicated to Washington Park and know the space.
 - Rotating rangers don't know the Park since it's so large, nor Park partners, since there are so many
- A vehicle break-in plan
 - In order to address car break-ins, it is evident that a plan is necessary

The group then identified next steps:

- A subgroup will research group communication tools
 - What parameters does the City and partners have to work within
- A better understanding of Ranger roles, hours, availability, etc.
 - The group agreed to develop a shared communications document with questions regarding PPR services

- This will be sent to PPR prior to the June 27th Ranger meeting
 - The group expressed interest in this meeting being in-person (a meeting space was identified)
 - EWP will reach out to PPR to express the group's interest in-person meeting with an expanded attended list
 - The full group expressed the desire to attend the meeting
- Develop car break-in plan
 - Heather will discuss this with the EWP board chair to determine where this lives, who owns it, how it would be funded.
- Meet quarterly with the TAC Committee and Safety and Security Committee to review progress on action items and next steps