

The Life of an Open Space Project

Case Study #1: Dept of Neighborhoods (DON) Neighborhood Matching Funds Grant for a Project on Parks Property

The following is an overview of some of the steps necessary to make improvements to a park owned by Seattle Parks & Recreation (SPR) – this process may or may not be the same for other land owners or funding mechanisms. After nearly each step, you should reassess who is involved and continually reach out to bring on new stakeholders (e.g. partners, neighbors, businesses) as some people will inevitably move on before the project is done. You will also want to get creative about keeping people engaged and interested. Each project is unique, but we hope this document helps you get your bearings as you begin your journey.

1. YOU HAVE AN IDEA FOR OPEN SPACE IMPROVEMENT!

2. Talk with neighbors, build support, create a steering committee that will be able to meet at least monthly.
 - a. Consider creating a “Core Steering Committee” of 4-5 members that meet to decide strategy and a much broader “Open Steering Committee” of 10+ individuals (incl. the Core members) who are very interested in the project but may not have slightly less time to commit. Core and Open meetings can alternate so that strategy (Core) alternates with action (Open).
 - b. The Core Steering Committee should include at least a Chair and Co-Chair (these will have signing authority, for example, on our Letter of Agreement). Other roles that are really useful include an “Outreach Manager” to create outreach strategy and manage contacts, “Finance Manager” to track budgets and manage funds, “Fundraising Manager” to create fundraising strategy and events.
 - c. The Open Steering Committee should be as big a tent as folks who want to help!
3. Determine which City department(s) own the land and who else you’ll need to work with – set up a meeting to get an idea of what they will allow (Property owner permission is required for any funder).
4. Develop a grant proposal for funding (see documents for applying for DON Neighborhood Matching Fund). Remember that you will: 1) need to verify a fiscal sponsor, 2) guarantee a match of ½ of the requested funding in either cash or equivalent volunteer hours/labor.

5. GRANT AWARDED!

6. Hire a Landscape Architect: Write a job description. Advertise in the Daily Journal of Commerce (DJC) *twice*, be sure that the title of the job announcement makes sense for the contractor you are seeking! , prepare criteria and interview questions. Make sure the DON program manager is involved and signs off on all of this. (Allow for 1-2 months)
7. If on Seattle Parks and Recreation land, you will need a sign posted (allow for 1-2 months) – your Parks Project Manager will be able to help with this.

8. SCHEMATIC DESIGN PROCESS: (\$25K-\$50K) (4-6 months)

- a. Organize a community meeting with food and fun to brainstorm ideas with the designer and get a sense of what is important to the neighborhood. Designer will come up with 2-3 ideas. If necessary, include a land survey so property lines are not in dispute.
- b. “ProView” – SPR’s internal review process. The designer will meet with ProView before the 2nd community meeting. Community members are not permitted to attend, but the designer should provide a summary of the comments.
- c. Organize the 2nd community meeting with food and fun to get more community input and to hear what people like or don’t like about the design options.
- d. Second ProView meeting.
- e. Organize the 3rd community meeting with food and fun to reveal what the designer has created. There should be preliminary cost estimates at this point.

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9. Design Development process:
 - a. The designer will develop details of the plan like potential artistic elements, paving material for plazas or benches, a refined plant list and potential phasing and provide drawings in AutoCAD (computer design and drafting software)
 - b. ProView#3 - SPR's internal review process.
10. Prepare a second grant for the next phase
11. **CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS:** (\$25K-\$50K) (6-12 months)
 - a. The designer will create technical drawings needed to send the project "out to bid" (for construction)
 - b. Hold a community event that engages the neighborhood, so they don't forget about this project!!
 - c. The designer will meet with "ProTech" staff (Parks internal technical review team) at least 3 times.
 - d. Parks staff helps obtain necessary permits (~3 months to get in the queue / ~8 weeks to permit)
 - e. Project goes out to bid by placing advertisements in the DJC and to the Builder's Exchange
 - f. Contractor is selected. Each property owner has a different process for selection.
12. **FUNDRAISING:** Midway through construction documents, you should have a more concise estimate of costs and should start your fundraising to include more than DON grants. NOTE: in this pressure cooker development market, construction projects are tending to run much higher than expected!! (6-12 months)
13. **CONSTRUCTION:**
 - a. Weekly meetings to discuss the status of the project that include the contractor, the designer, your Parks project manager, the Parks inspector and a representative from your group. The inspector is responsible for making sure that the project conforms to Park Standards. The designer makes sure that the project looks like the design that was created by your community. A representative from the community is important because questions come up periodically that may need to be discussed by the steering community.
14. Parks and the designer approve the work!
15. Plan a ribbon cutting celebration and invite everyone who helped make the project a success!