



Downtown
Seattle
Association

Metropolitan
Improvement
District



Westlake and Occidental Parks Activation Report

July 1-Dec. 31, 2020

A public/nonprofit partnership between Seattle Parks and Recreation and the Downtown Seattle Association to enhance Westlake Park and Occidental Square through staffing, activation and regular programming.



Key Findings

Reinvesting in Our Parks

Every dollar raised in Westlake Park and Occidental Square is reinvested in park activation.

Leveraging Dollars

Every dollar of Seattle Parks and Recreation funding generated an additional \$7.07—providing a smart, efficient leveraging of SPR dollars to enhance and activate Westlake and Occidental parks.

COVID-19

Due to COVID-19, the amount of summer and holiday programming allowed in Westlake Park and Occidental square was limited.

Positive Signs

While both Westlake Park and Occidental Square experienced fewer visitors in 2020 compared to 2019, Westlake Park finished with a strong holiday season. December 2020 saw the most visits since the pandemic began.

Overview

In July 2016, building on the success of a one-year park-activation pilot, DSA, in cooperation with other downtown stakeholders, entered into a five-year agreement with the City of Seattle to manage and program Westlake and Occidental parks. This innovative public/nonprofit collaboration with Seattle Parks and Recreation established a new model for activating and managing urban public spaces in Seattle.

In addition to city funding, this agreement required DSA and the Metropolitan Improvement District, along with partners (Alliance for Pioneer Square, Friends of Waterfront Seattle and the Seattle Parks Foundation) to contribute significant financial and organizational resources toward this effort. Every dollar raised in Westlake and Occidental parks is reinvested in park activation.

This public/nonprofit park-activation model enhances Westlake Park and Occidental Square by ensuring dedicated staffing, regular daily programming and investment in new, colorful park amenities to accomplish several key goals:

- Increase the overall number of park visitors, including children;
- Improve the gender balance of visitors using these public spaces;
- Enhance the overall attractiveness of the parks;
- Establish a sustainable financial model to support park activation efforts;
- Provide outreach and support to park visitors in need; and
- Explore the benefits that a community approach to park activation and management can offer.

Building on this momentum, the fifth year of the parks agreement continued to demonstrate strong park activation results.

Estimated Park Visitors

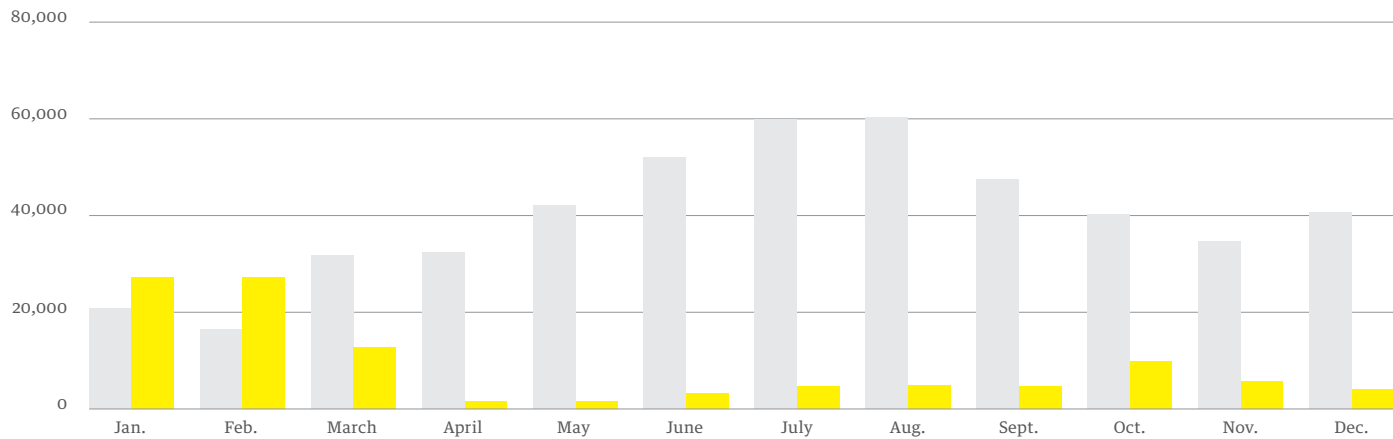
July 1-Dec. 31, 2020

A key part of DSA’s park-activation strategy is daily staffing with park ambassadors. The ambassadors are critical to making the parks clean, safe and welcoming public spaces. Ambassadors continue to do some manual park observations. However, in order to maintain accurate counts with limited personnel during COVID-19, DSA partnered with Placer.ai to help provide consistent park visitor data for Westlake Park and Occidental Square. The 2019 data below was retroactively changed to use the same Placer.ai methodology that we’ve adopted this year for purposes of comparison.

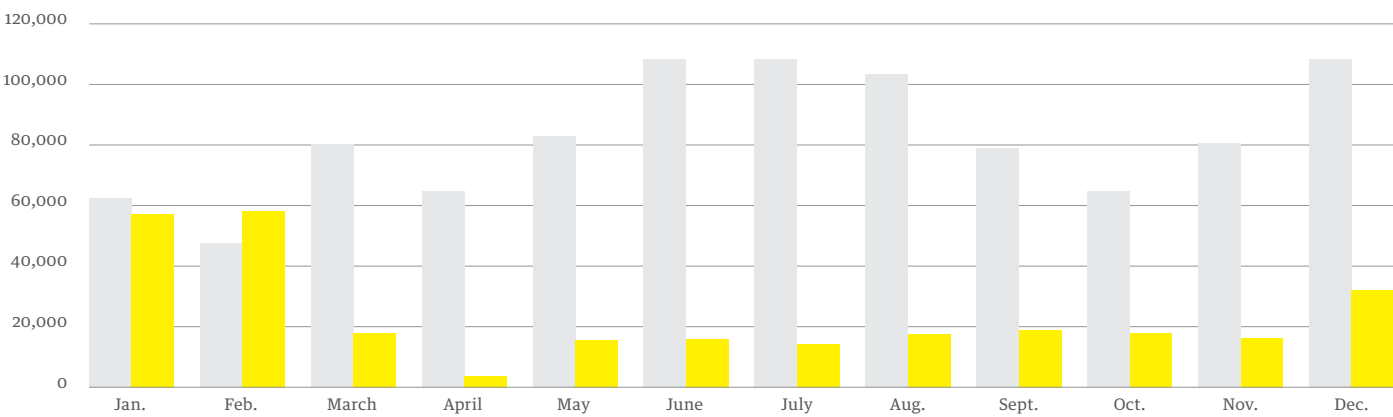
Key Findings

- Due to COVID-19, both Westlake Park and Occidental Square saw significant decreases in annual attendance compared to 2019. Westlake Park saw a 71% decrease, while Occidental Square experienced a 78% decline in visitors.
- There were an estimated 32,600 visitors in Westlake Park during December 2020, marking the highest month of park visitors since the start of the pandemic.

OCCIDENTAL



WESTLAKE





Park Activation Revenue & Expenses / July 1-Dec. 31, 2020

REVENUE

Seattle Parks and Recreation Funding	\$50,000
Partner Funding*	\$70,000
MID Funding	\$283,333
Total Revenue	\$403,333

**Alliance for Pioneer Square, Friends of Waterfront Seattle and Seattle Parks Foundation*

EXPENSES

Park Staffing & Security	\$330,699
Activations (e.g., buskers, arts & crafts)	\$41,558
Equipment (e.g., lighting, planters)	\$7,961
Other Expenses (e.g., marketing, uniforms)	\$23,115
Total Expenses	\$403,333

Net Income

\$0

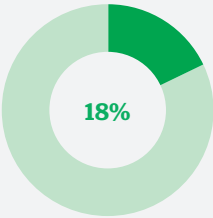
PERMIT FEE EVENTS

Firefighter Memorial	Oct. 2	\$0
Shop Small Saturday	Nov. 28	\$0
Total Event Permit Fees		\$0

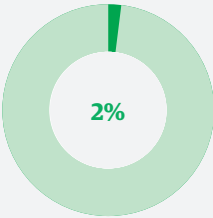


Women- and Minority-owned Business Outreach

As part of the five-year parks agreement, DSA established an aspirational goal of directing 18% of the contract’s total dollars toward WMBE firms. We remain committed to this goal. DSA has undertaken several steps that will help the organization reach long-term WMBE goals, such as establishing an RFP process for projects of more than \$5,000, and encouraging current WMBE vendors to register and participate in the city’s WMBE directory. Many of the vendors that DSA partners with are unfamiliar with the city’s WMBE goals and business directory. DSA has worked to educate all vendors on these additional opportunities.



Overall WMBE Aspirational Goal



July-December 2020 WMBE Outcome

\$9,220
spent on WMBE
2% of all expenses

WMBE expenses were lower during the period due to COVID-19 and the limited amount of programming possible due to public health restrictions.

MID Outreach and Including Underserved Communities

Providing outreach and support to individuals in need is another key component of the park-activation strategy. The DSA-managed MID Outreach Team works closely with park staff to help park visitors in need. Outreach ambassadors regularly visit Westlake and Occidental parks to establish relationships with frequent park users who might need assistance.

Between July and December 2020, the MID Outreach Team made 160 outreach engagements in the parks. These contacts allow ambassadors to provide ongoing case management and social service referrals, as well as food,

water and toiletry items. Sixty-eight outreach contacts were made in Westlake Park and 92 in Occidental Square over this period.

DSA is working to meet the needs of other underserved populations as well. For example, to increase the diversity of survey respondents and WMBE partners, DSA plans to increase advertising and provide information in non-English language publications. Some key print materials were translated in fall 2018, and going forward the parks survey is available online in Spanish and Chinese.

In partnership with



SEATTLE PARKS FOUNDATION



Seattle Parks & Recreation

Occidental Square and Westlake Park are managed by the Downtown Seattle Association in partnership with Seattle Parks and Recreation.

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