



Downtown  
Seattle  
Association

Metropolitan  
Improvement  
District



Westlake Park, Occidental Square,  
Bell Street Park and Pioneer Park

# Activation Report

Jan. 1-June 30, 2024

Through a public/nonprofit partnership with Seattle Parks and Recreation, the Downtown Seattle Association, with funding from the Metropolitan Improvement District, works to enhance Westlake, Occidental, Bell Street and Pioneer parks through staffing, activation and regular programming.





## Key Findings

### Reinvesting in Our Parks

Every dollar raised in Westlake, Occidental, Bell Street and Pioneer parks is reinvested in park activation.

### Leveraging Dollars

Every dollar of Seattle Parks and Recreation funding generated an additional \$9.13 – providing a smart, efficient leveraging of SPR dollars to enhance and activate Westlake, Occidental, Bell Street and Pioneer parks.

### Welcoming Two New Parks

In 2024, DSA and the city of Seattle expanded their partnership to include two additional downtown parks: Pioneer Park in the Pioneer Square neighborhood and Bell Street Park in Belltown.

## Overview

In 2016, DSA entered into a five-year agreement with the city of Seattle to manage and program Westlake Park and Occidental Square. In September 2023 the Seattle City Council voted unanimously to renew this public/private partnership for six years and expand the agreement to include Bell Street Park in Belltown and Pioneer Park in Pioneer Square.

In addition to city funding, this agreement requires DSA and the Metropolitan Improvement District to contribute significant financial and organizational resources toward this effort.

This public/nonprofit park-activation model enhances these downtown parks 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
- Enhance the overall attractiveness of the parks
- Establish a sustainable financial model to support park-activation efforts
- Explore the benefits that a community approach to park activation and management can offer

# Estimated Park Visits

Jan. 1-June 30, 2024

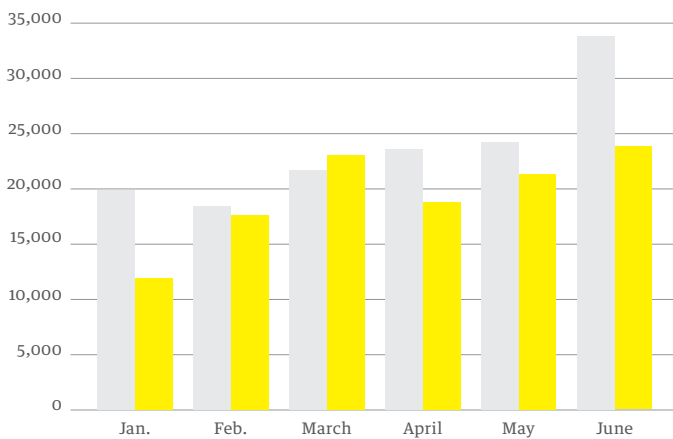
A key part of DSA’s park-activation strategy is daily staffing with ambassadors. They are in the parks almost every day of the year, rain or shine. Ambassadors are stewards of the public realm and help make it an inviting and welcoming place for all. Each day they set up and put away the daily amenities in the parks such as furniture, signage and games, as well as provide support for park programming and events. Between January and June, park visits continued to increase as the weather improved. During the spring season, the parks hosted buskers and art installations, as well as several new events like Food Truck Fest in Westlake Park, BE Great, a celebration of Black excellence and a festival supporting the BIPOC

community, in Occidental Square and a Puppy Crawl in Bell Street Park.

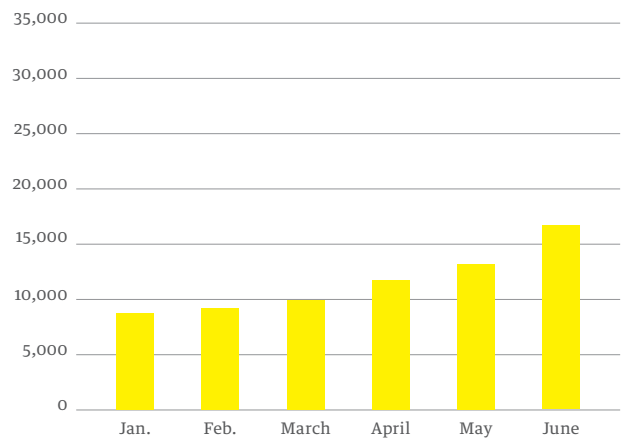
## Key Findings

- In the first six months of 2024, both Westlake Park and Occidental Square saw declines in park visits compared to the same period in 2023. Some of the decline can be attributed to fewer demonstrations in 2024 and repairs in Westlake Park that closed portions of the space.
- June saw the highest level of park visits across all four parks, kicking off a strong summer season.

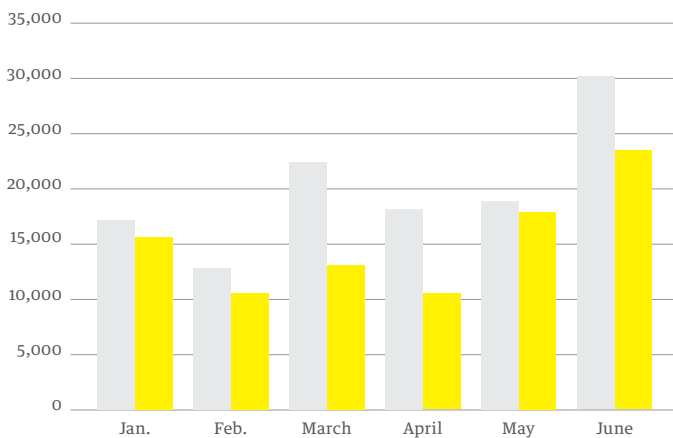
### OCCIDENTAL



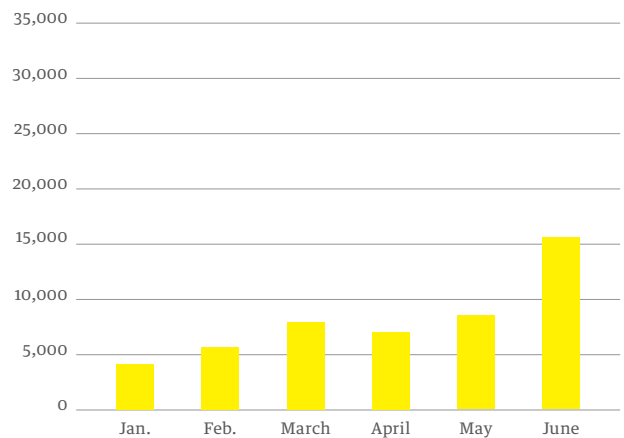
### BELL STREET



### WESTLAKE



### PIONEER PARK



# Changing Park Perceptions

## Surveys: Summer 2024 and Winter 2023

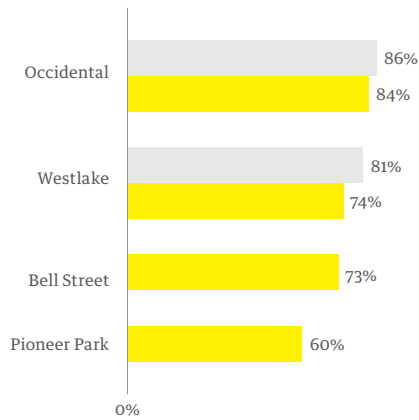
Park surveys are conducted twice a year, typically during the summer and holiday seasons. These surveys are key to measuring visitors' perceptions of Westlake, Occidental, Bell Street and Pioneer parks as clean, safe and welcoming public spaces.

Seeking a broad sample population, surveys were distributed through a variety of methods and in multiple locations. Paper surveys were available in the parks and an electronic version was distributed via email and hosted on the DSA website. Online versions of the survey were also available in Spanish and Chinese.

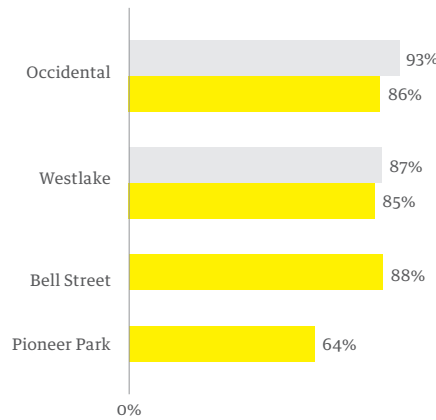
### Key Findings

- Perceptions of safety decreased slightly in both Westlake Park and Occidental Square, declining seven and two points respectively from the previous survey.
- In the initial baseline survey for Bell Street Park and Pioneer Park, data indicate concerns about safety from park visitors. Going forward, DSA plans to provide an enhanced security presence for added safety.
- Westlake, Occidental and Bell Street parks received high marks for cleanliness. Although a small sample size, data indicate perceptions of cleanliness in Pioneer Park were significantly lower, with only 64% of respondents finding the park clean.
- All four parks saw a significant number of respondents indicating that they planned to return to the park, ranging from 88% of respondents for Pioneer Park visitors to 93% of visitors to Bell Street Park.

#### FELT SAFE



#### FOUND THE SPACE WELCOMING



■ Winter 2023  
■ Summer 2024

*Bell Street Park: summer 2024 (n=57)*

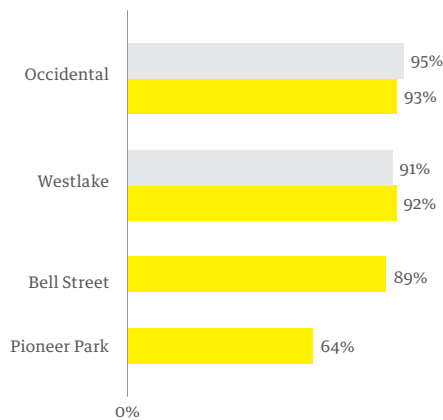
*Pioneer Park: summer 2024 (n=23)*

*Westlake Park: winter 2023 (n=263) and summer 2024 (n=257)*

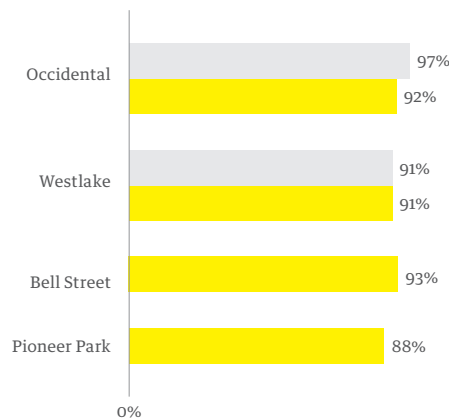
*Occidental Square: winter 2023 (n=173) and summer 2024 (n=162)*

*Note: Survey results only include valid responses.*

#### FOUND THE SPACE CLEAN



#### PLAN TO RETURN







# Park Activation Revenue & Expenses

Jan. 1-June 30, 2024

### PERMIT FEE EVENTS

Real Change	Feb. 15, 2024	\$75
International Society for Krishna Consciousness of WA	March 30, 2024	\$170
Children's Health Defense	April 17, 2024	\$555
One Day of Service	May 18, 2024	\$0
Code Red - Victory Outreach	June 8, 2024	\$0
Coyote Central Art Installation	June 21, 2024	\$0
Washington Conservation Action	June 27, 2024	\$0
<b>Total event permit fees</b>		<b>\$800</b>

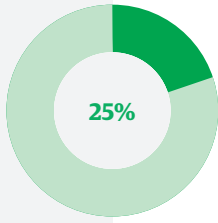
### REVENUE

Seattle Parks and Recreation funding	\$162,500
Core Funders	\$300,069
MID funding	\$1,182,957
Permits	\$800
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>\$1,646,326</b>

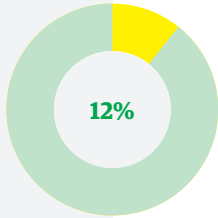
### EXPENSES

Park staffing and security	\$1,212,861
Activations (e.g., buskers, arts & crafts)	\$369,088
Equipment (e.g., lighting, planters)	\$33,365
Fixed assets	\$10,092
Other expenses (e.g., marketing, uniforms)	\$20,920
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$1,646,326</b>

**Net income** **\$0**



Overall WMBE Aspirational Goal



January-June 2024 WMBE Outcome

**\$193,718**  
spent on WMBE  
*12% of all expenses*



## Women- and Minority-owned Business Outreach

As part of the new parks agreement, DSA established an aspirational goal of directing 25% of the contract’s total dollars toward WMBE firms. We remain committed to this goal and continue to look for new ways to provide access and opportunity to WMBE and other BIPOC businesses and artists in the parks.

Between January-June 2024, DSA/MID directed more than \$193,000 toward WMBE businesses, representing nearly 12% of total expenses during the period. In addition to

this funding, the parks welcomed a significant number of WMBE-owned food trucks into the parks. From January-June 2024, 32 different WMBE food trucks made 350 park visits, generating \$257,995 in food truck sales.

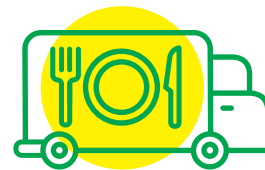
Many of the vendors that DSA/MID partners with are unfamiliar with the city’s WMBE goals and business directory. DSA encourages current WMBE vendors to register and participate in the city’s WMBE directory and learn about additional opportunities.

## Caring for Park Visitors in Need

Providing outreach and support to individuals in need is another key component of the park-activation strategy. DSA/MID ambassadors work to help visitors in need and establish relationships with those who might need assistance.

Between July 2023 and June 2024, MID ambassadors provided 575 welfare checks and outreach support to park visitors in need. In that time period, there were 198 welfare checks in Westlake Park, 194 in Bell Street Park, 95 in Pioneer Square Park and 88 in Occidental Square.

### WMBE FOOD TRUCK SNAPSHOT



**32**

unique food trucks  
in Westlake Park

**350**

appearances

In partnership with



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

[downtownseattle.org/parks](https://downtownseattle.org/parks)