



Downtown
Seattle
Association

Metropolitan
Improvement
District



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

Activation Report

July 1- Dec. 31, 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 \$6.46 — providing a smart, efficient leveraging of SPR dollars to enhance and activate Westlake, Occidental, Bell Street and Pioneer parks.

Changing Perceptions

Perceptions of safety and cleanliness significantly improved for Westlake Park and Pioneer Park. Additionally, all four parks saw a strong number of respondents indicating plans to return.

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

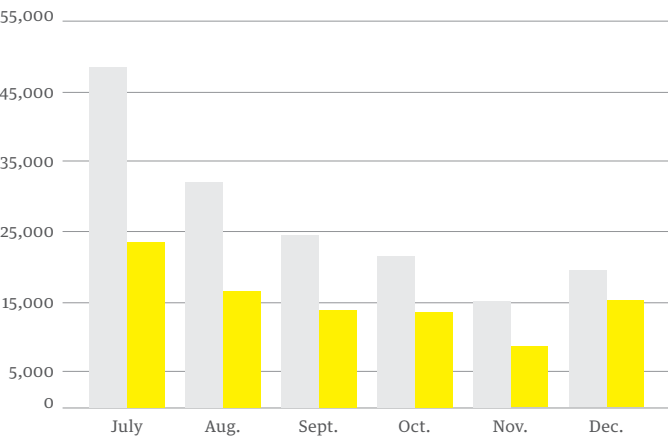
July 1-Dec. 31, 2024

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. During the summer season, the parks hosted concerts, art installations and a monthly food truck festival. And for the holiday season, the parks welcomed downtown visitors with a pop up ice skating rink in Occidental Square, holiday lights and tree lighting celebration in Westlake Park and Dickens carolers performing in Pioneer Park.

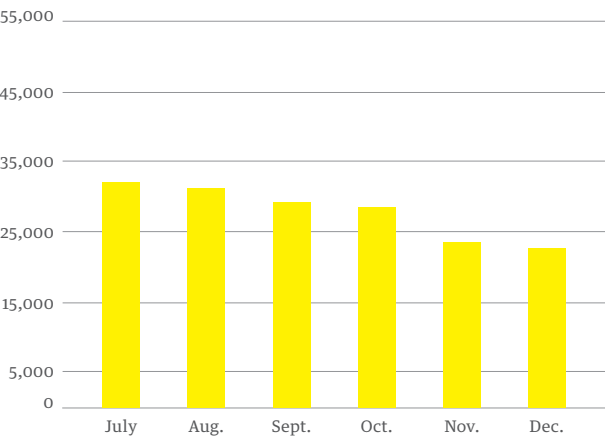
Key Findings

- Westlake Park saw park visits increase between July-Sept. 2024, rising more than 7% compared to same period in 2023.
- Occidental Square saw a relative decrease during the July-Sept. 2024 period primarily due to a strong comparable period in 2023 for park visits (i.e., several major concerts and MLB All-Star Week among other events in 2023).
- Downtown parks saw solid foot traffic during the holiday season. In 2023, Westlake Park hosted several large protests that did not occur in 2024 leading to significantly lower park visits by comparison.

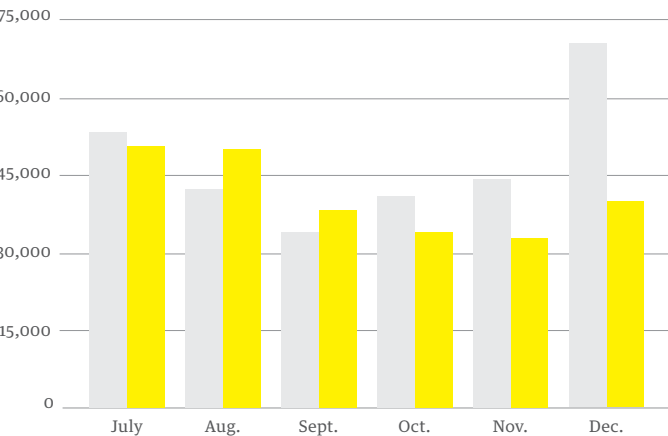
OCCIDENTAL SQUARE



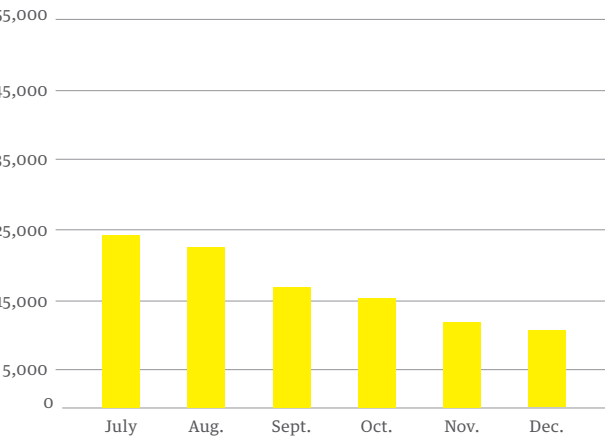
BELL STREET PARK



WESTLAKE PARK



PIONEER PARK



Changing Park Perceptions

Surveys: Summer 2024 and Winter 2024

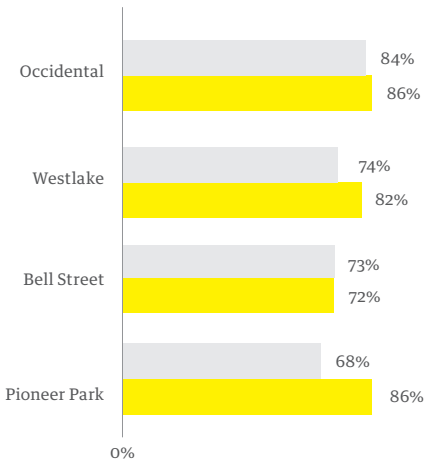
Park surveys are conducted twice a year, typically during the early summer and holiday seasons. These surveys are key to measuring visitors' perceptions of Westlake, Occidental, Bell Street and Pioneer parks as clean, safe and welcoming public spaces.

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.

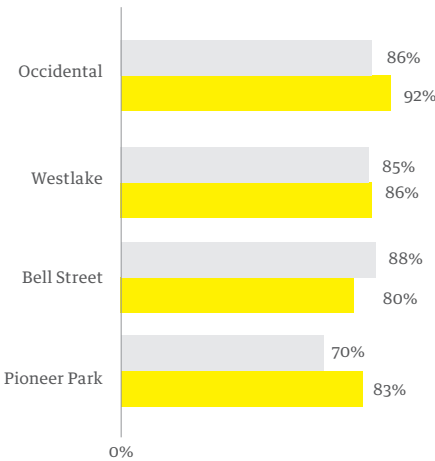
Key Findings

- Perceptions of safety increased significantly in both Westlake Park and Pioneer Park, rising eight and 20 points respectively from the previous survey.
- Perceptions of safety in Bell Street Park remained lower with 72% of visitors finding the park safe. Going forward, DSA plans to provide enhanced security presence during some events and activations for added safety.
- Occidental Square and Pioneer Park saw improvement in perceptions of the parks being clean, increasing six and nine points, respectively from the Summer 2024 survey.
- All four parks saw the vast majority of respondents indicate that they planned to return to the park, ranging from 94% of respondents for Pioneer Park to 98% of visitors to Occidental Square.

FELT SAFE



FOUND THE SPACE WELCOMING



■ Summer 2024
■ Winter 2024

*Bell Street Park:
summer 2024 (n=16)
and winter 2024 (n=110)*

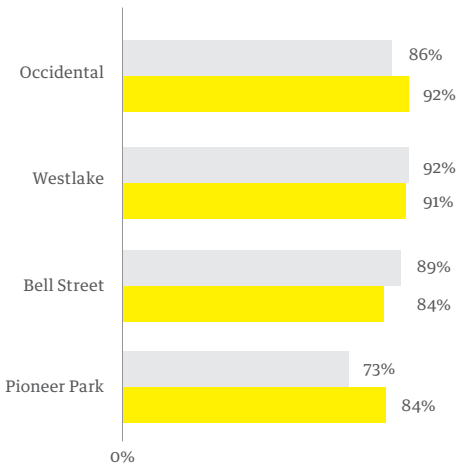
*Pioneer Park:
summer 2024 (n=24)
and winter 2024 (n=64)*

*Westlake Park:
summer 2024 (n=265)
and winter 2024 (n=333)*

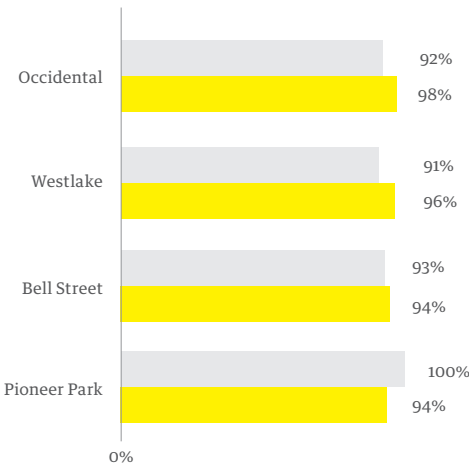
*Occidental Square:
summer 2024 (n=168)
and winter 2024 (n=173)*

*Note: Survey results
only include valid
responses.*

FOUND THE SPACE CLEAN



PLAN TO RETURN





Park Activation Revenue & Expenses

July 1-Dec. 31, 2024

PERMIT FEE EVENTS

Pioneer Square Fest	July 7, 2024	\$1,350
Aqui Mercado	July 13, 2024	\$1,661
United Revival	July 27, 2024	\$915
Total event permit fees		\$3,926



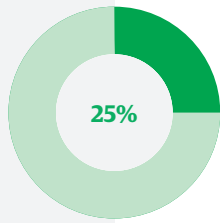
REVENUE

Seattle Parks and Recreation funding	\$162,500
MID funding	\$1,044,775
Food trucks	\$1,065
Permits	\$3,926
Total revenue	\$1,212,266

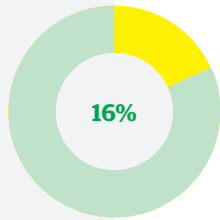
EXPENSES

Park staffing and security	\$697,278
Activations (e.g., buskers, arts & crafts)	\$415,505
Equipment (e.g., lighting, planters)	\$29,445
Fixed assets	\$49,203
Other expenses (e.g., marketing, uniforms)	\$20,835
Total expenses	\$1,212,266

Net income	\$0
------------	-----



Overall WMBE
Aspirational Goal



July-December 2024
WMBE Outcome

\$192,738
spent on WMBE
16% 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 July-December 2024, DSA/MID directed more than \$192,000 toward WMBE businesses, representing nearly 16% of total expenses during the period.

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.

Food Trucks

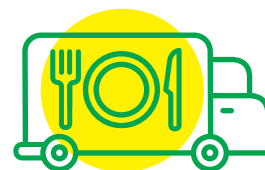
The parks also welcomed a significant number of food trucks, many of them WMBE-owned, into the parks. From July-December 2024, 34 different food trucks made 307 park appearances.

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 and December 2024, DSA/MID ambassadors provided 1,607 welfare checks and outreach support to park visitors in need. In that time period, there were 236 welfare checks in Westlake Park, 800 in Bell Street Park, 90 in Pioneer Park and 481 in Occidental Square.

FOOD TRUCK SNAPSHOT



34

unique food trucks
in Westlake Park

307

appearances

In partnership with



Seattle
Parks & Recreation

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