



Downtown
Seattle
Association

Metropolitan
Improvement
District



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

Activation Report

Jan. 1-June 30, 2025

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 Park, Occidental Square, Bell Street Park and Pioneer Park 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 \$5.67 – providing a smart, efficient leveraging of SPR dollars to enhance and activate Westlake, Occidental, Bell Street and Pioneer parks.

Programming the Parks

Between January and June 2025, DSA/MID provided nearly 12,000 hours of unique programming and activations among the four parks.

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

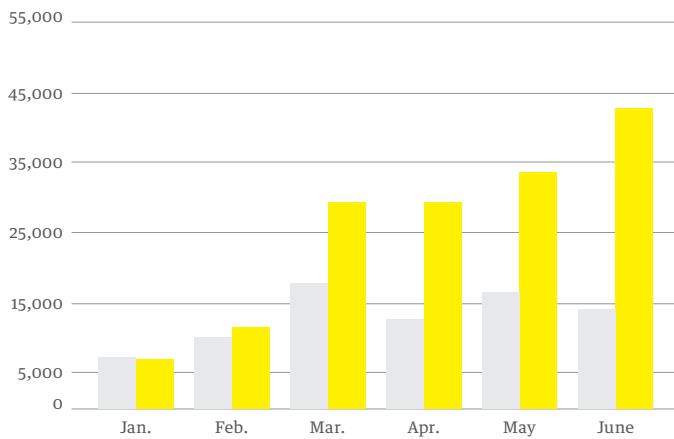
Jan. 1-June, 30, 2025

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 spring and early summer season, the parks hosted various art installations and cultural events such as a Lunar New Year celebration and Pride month selfie stations. And for FIFA Club World Cup, activations included watch parties at Westlake Park and a Community Fan Fest and soccer pitch in Occidental Square.

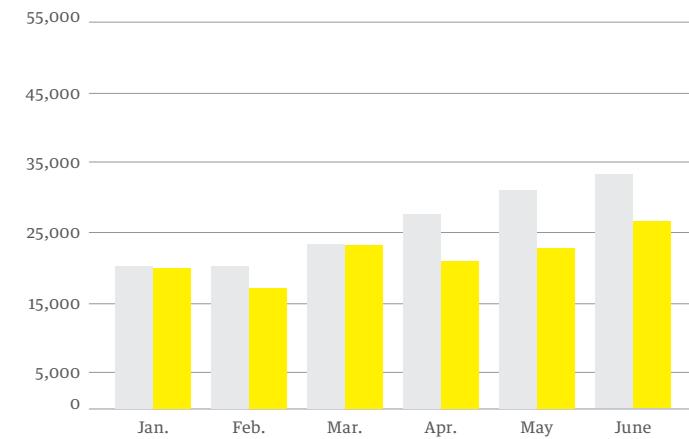
Key Findings

- Between April-June, visits to Westlake Park increased 16% year-over-year, and were up 58% in April compared to the same period in 2024. During that same period, Pioneer Park visits increased 29%.
- Occidental Square park visits were up 143% in Q2 2025 compared to 2024. In particular, June was up 201% compared to June 2024 due in part to Seattle hosting FIFA Club World Cup games and associated events.
- However, Bell Street Park park visits were down 23% in Q2 2025 year-over-year likely due to an increase in street disorder in the surrounding area.

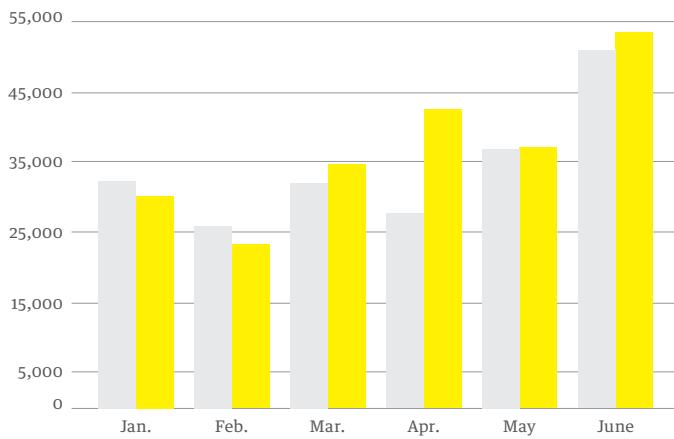
OCCIDENTAL SQUARE



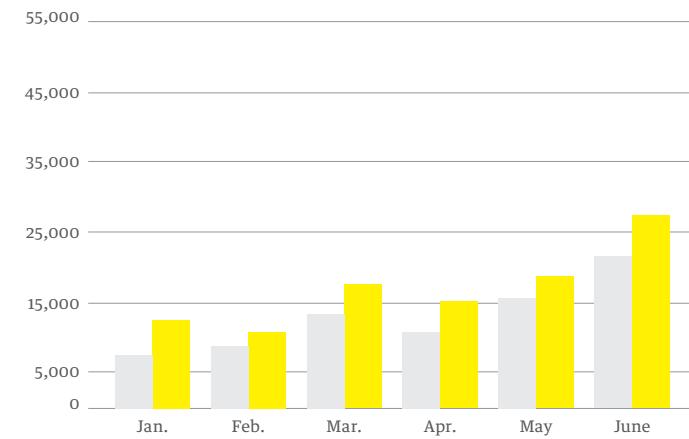
BELL STREET PARK



WESTLAKE PARK



PIONEER PARK



Changing Park Perceptions

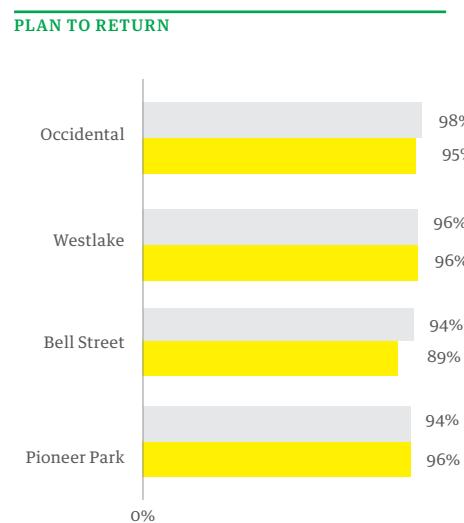
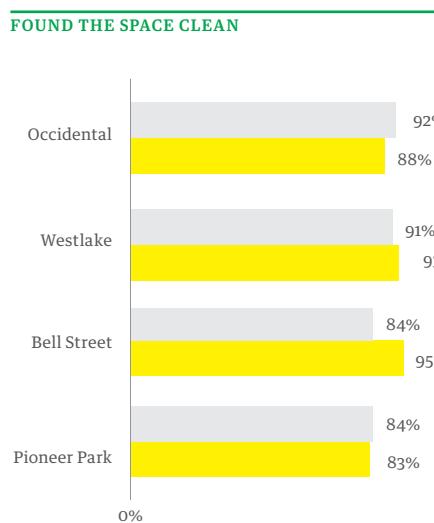
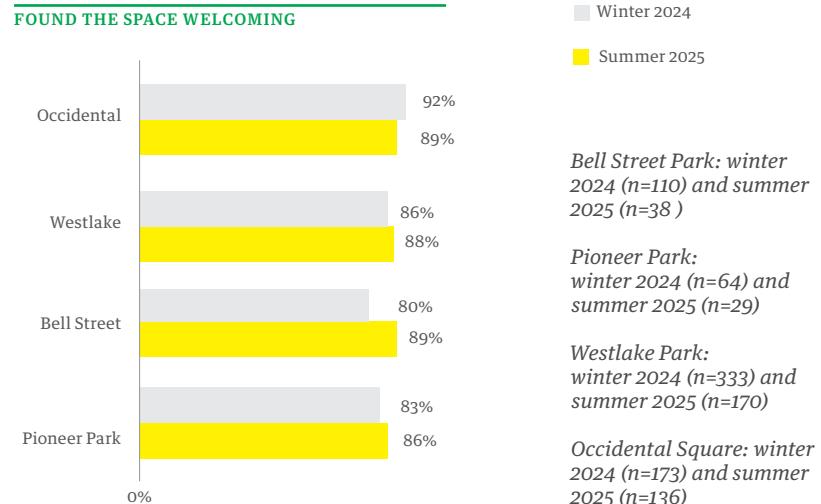
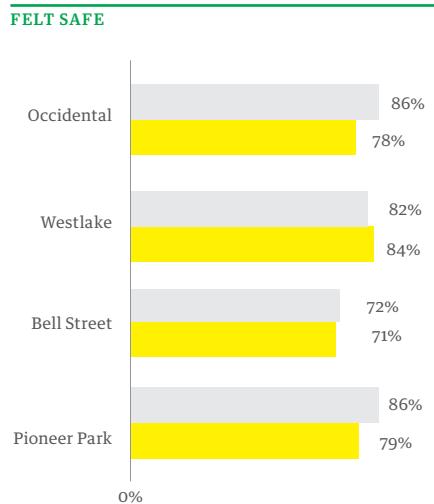
Surveys: Winter 2024 and Summer 2025

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

- Data indicate some deterioration in perceptions of safety since the previous survey in Winter 2024. Occidental Square and Pioneer Park declined 7- and 8-points, respectively.
- In response to declining perceptions of safety, DSA is investing more than \$190,000 in physical upgrades to Bell Street Park, with a primary focus on lighting improvements in Q4 2025.
- Bell Street Park did see improvement in visitors finding the space clean and welcoming, increasing 11- and 9-points, respectively compared to six months prior.
- Respondents indicated they planned to return to Westlake Park, Occidental Square and Pioneer Park. Eighty-nine percent of respondents indicated they planned to return to Bell Street Park, a 5-point decline from Winter 2024.



Winter 2024
Summer 2025

Bell Street Park: winter 2024 (n=110) and summer 2025 (n=38)

Pioneer Park: winter 2024 (n=64) and summer 2025 (n=29)

Westlake Park: winter 2024 (n=333) and summer 2025 (n=170)

Occidental Square: winter 2024 (n=173) and summer 2025 (n=136)

Note: Survey results only include valid responses.



Park Activation Revenue & Expenses

Jan. 1-June 30, 2025

PERMIT FEE EVENTS

Vedic Cultural Center Event	March 15, 2025	\$365
MRA Mobile Experiential Pop-up	April 1, 2025	\$200
Seattle Sounders Community Fan Fest	June 2025	\$355
Club World Cup Banner	June 2025	\$975
Total event permit fees		\$1,895

REVENUE

Seattle Parks and Recreation funding	\$162,500
MID funding	\$905,309
Food trucks	\$5,317
Permits	\$1,895
Sponsorships	\$9,500
Total revenue	\$1,084,521

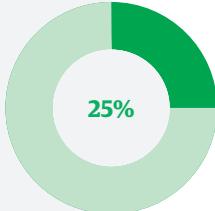
EXPENSES

Park staffing and security	\$751,079
Activations (e.g., buskers, arts & crafts)	\$276,104
Equipment (e.g., lighting, planters)	\$14,667
Fixed assets	\$35,094
Other expenses (e.g., marketing, uniforms)	\$7,577
Total expenses	\$1,084,521

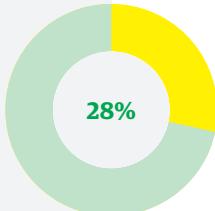
Net income

\$0





Overall WMBE Aspirational Goal



January-June 2025 WMBE Outcome

Note: Going forward, in order to more accurately reflect the share of programming and activation expenses directed toward WMBE organizations, WMBE expenses will be reported as the percentage of all contract, vendor and concession expenses per the operations and management agreement.

\$94,793
spent on WMBE

28% of contract, vendor and concession expenses



Women- and Minority-owned Business Outreach

As part of the new parks agreement, DSA established an aspirational goal of directing 25% of contract, concession and vendor 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 2025 DSA/MID directed nearly \$95,000 toward more than 50 different WMBE businesses, representing nearly 28% 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.

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 January and June 2025, DSA/MID ambassadors provided 1,516 welfare checks and outreach support to park visitors in need. In that time period, there were 303 welfare checks in Westlake Park, 734 in Bell Street Park, 102 in Pioneer Park and 377 in Occidental Square.

FOOD TRUCKS

The parks welcomed a significant number of food trucks into the space. From January-June 2025, 28 different food trucks made 368 appearances. Nearly two-thirds of the visiting food trucks were WMBE-owned. They generated nearly \$190,000 in sales during this period.



28

unique food trucks in Westlake Park

368

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