



Downtown  
Seattle  
Association

Metropolitan  
Improvement  
District



## Westlake Park & Occidental Square **Activation Report**

Jan. 1-June 30, 2021

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 \$12.60 – 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 programming was limited at the beginning of the year but increased significantly starting summer 2021.

### Positive Signs

As downtown begins to recover from the pandemic, both Westlake Park and Occidental Square saw significant increases in park visits in spring 2021 compared to the previous year. While still lower than pre-pandemic counts, this is the parks' most visited period since the pandemic began.

## Overview

In 2016, DSA entered into a five-year agreement with the City of Seattle to manage and program Westlake and Occidental parks. Building on its success, this agreement has been extended an additional two years through 2022. 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.

As the first urban center in the U.S. to feel the impacts of COVID-19, Seattle's Westlake Park and Occidental Square had to curtail activations significantly throughout the pandemic. As downtown begins to recover, we are increasing safe, socially distanced activations, and are seeing improved results as people return to public spaces.

# Estimated Park Visitors

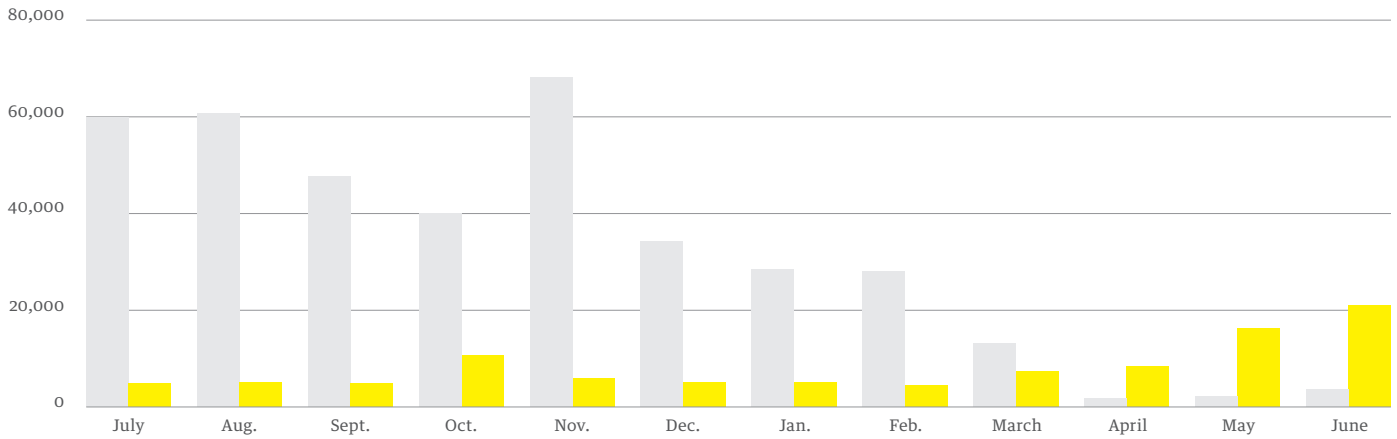
Jan. 1-June 30, 2021

A key part of DSA’s park-activation strategy is daily staffing with park ambassadors. The ambassadors are critical to ensuring the parks clean, safe and welcoming public spaces. Ambassadors continue to do some manual park observations. However, starting in 2020, we partnered with Placer.ai, to help provide reliable park visitor data for Westlake Park and Occidental Square.

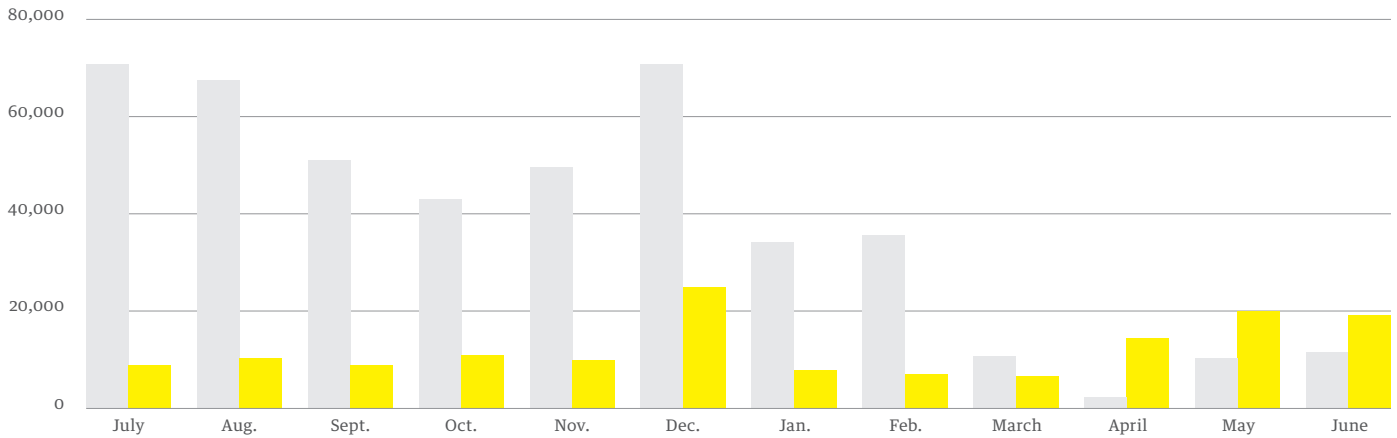
## Key Findings

- While COVID-19 continued to impact park visits at the start of 2021, this spring both Westlake Park and Occidental Square began to see significant increases in park visits compared to the same period last year.
- Between April and June 2021, Westlake Park saw nearly 53,000 visitors – an increase of 124% compared to the same period last year, and with the reopening of sporting events to fans and increased park activations, Occidental Square saw visits increase to 45,300 – a 527% increase from previous year.

### OCcidental



### WESTLAKE





## Park Activation Revenue & Expenses / Jan. 1-June 30, 2021

### REVENUE

Seattle Parks and Recreation Funding	\$50,000
Partner Funding*	\$81,670
MID Funding	\$539,924
Other Income (e.g., permit fees, in-kind donations)	\$8,525

**Total Revenue** **\$680,119**

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

### EXPENSES

Park Staffing & Security	\$545,522
Activations (e.g., buskers, arts & crafts)	\$66,281
Equipment (e.g., lighting, planters)	\$26,870
Fixed Assets (e.g., furniture, bookcases)	\$3,955
Other Expenses (e.g., marketing, uniforms)	\$37,491

**Total Expenses** **\$680,119**

**Net Income** **\$0**

### PERMIT FEE EVENTS

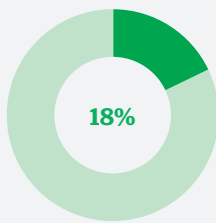
Coming to America Flag	March 5-7	\$75
Amazon Treasure Truck	June 23	\$150

**Total Event Permit Fees** **\$225**

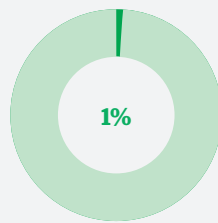


## Women- and Minority-owned Business Outreach

As part of the original 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 2021 WMBE Outcome

**\$4,513**  
spent on WMBE  
*1% 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

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 January and June 2021, the MID Outreach Team made 126 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-five outreach contacts were made in Westlake Park and 61 in Occidental Square over this period.

In partnership with



SEATTLE PARKS FOUNDATION



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

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