



Downtown
Seattle
Association

Metropolitan
Improvement
District



Westlake Park & Occidental Square Activation Report

Jan. 1-June 30, 2022

Through a public/nonprofit partnership with Seattle Parks and Recreation, the Downtown Seattle Association and Metropolitan Improvement District work together 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 \$16.04 – 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 reduced in 2020; however in 2021 full parks programming returned and continued.

Positive Signs

June was the most popular month for park visits for both parks – a positive sign for the start of the summer tourist season.

Overview

In 2016, DSA entered into a five-year agreement with the city of Seattle to manage and program Westlake Park and Occidental Square. Building on its success, this agreement has been extended through May 2023. 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 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;
- Enhance the overall attractiveness of the parks;
- Establish a sustainable financial model to support park-activation efforts; and
- Explore the benefits that a community approach to park activation and management can offer.

Seattle was the first urban center in the U.S. to feel the impacts of COVID-19. As such, Seattle's Westlake Park and Occidental Square had to curtail activations significantly throughout the pandemic. As downtown continues to recover, we are increasing safe, socially distanced activations, and are seeing improved results as people return to public spaces. Still significant challenges remain to improving park perceptions and returning to pre-pandemic levels of park visitors.

Estimated Park Visits

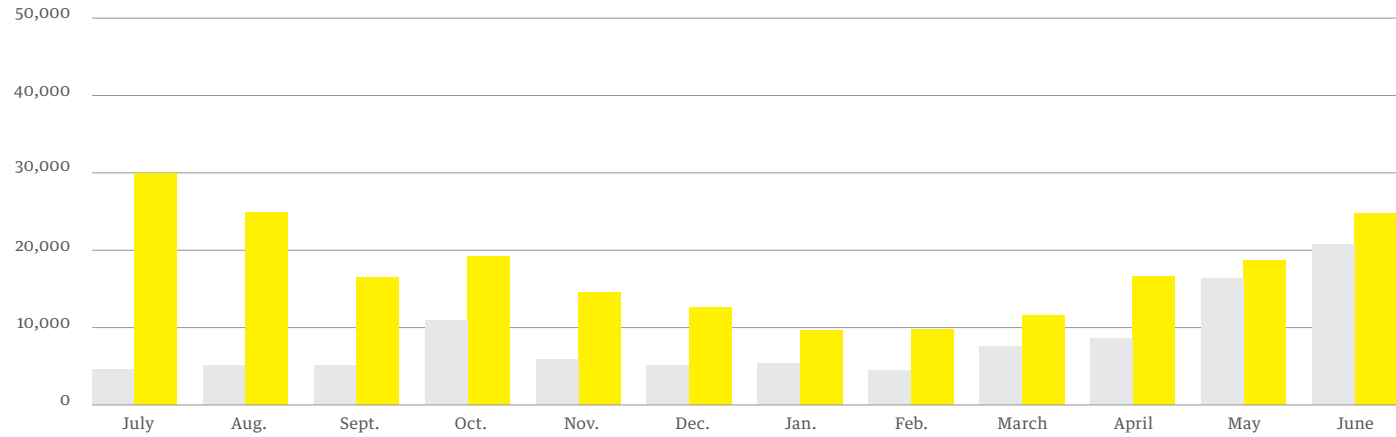
Jan. 1-June 30, 2022

A key part of DSA’s park-activation strategy is daily staffing with ambassadors. Throughout the pandemic, the ambassadors have been critical to ensuring the parks remained clean, safe and welcoming public spaces. While some programming and activations had to be reimagined due to public health restrictions, ambassadors continued to find creative ways to make the parks engaging and inviting places. Some events were a return of outdoor concerts, dueling piano performances, painting workshops and happy hour events in the parks.

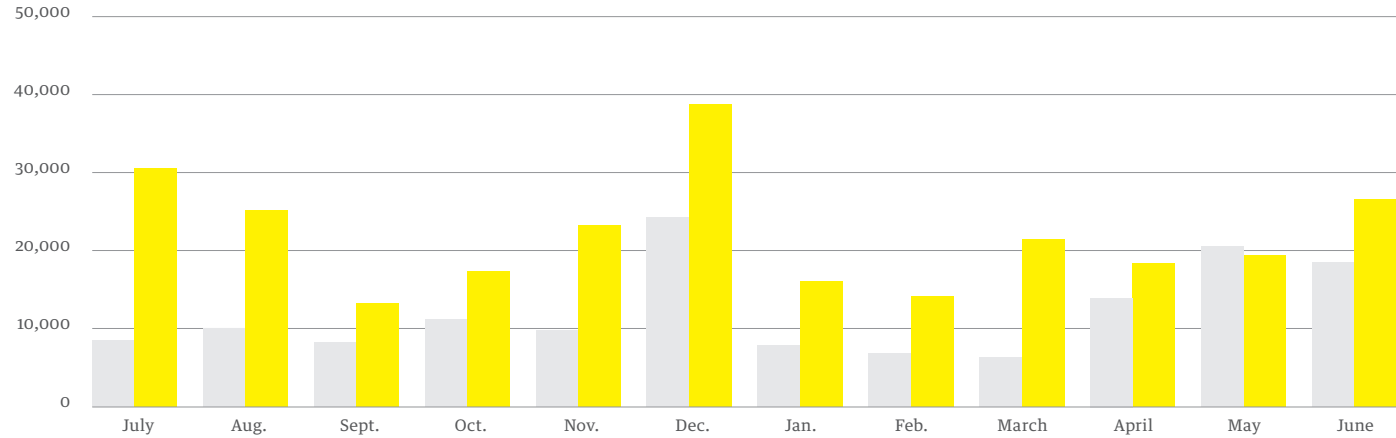
Key Findings

- In the first six months of 2022, Westlake Park visits increased 57% and Occidental Park grew 44%, compared to same period in 2021.
- For both parks, June was the highest month for total park visits – a positive sign for summer visitorship.
- As workers have been slower to return downtown, visitors have been key for the parks. In the first half of 2022, both Occidental Square and Westlake Park’s most popular days were Saturdays and Sundays.

OCCIDENTAL



WESTLAKE





Park Activation Revenue & Expenses / Jan. 1-June 30, 2022

REVENUE

Seattle Parks and Recreation Funding	\$50,000
MID Funding	\$ 796,799
Other Income (e.g., permit fees, in-kind donations)	\$4,957
Total Revenue	\$851,756

PERMIT FEE EVENTS

IHEARTCOMIX / Massive Talent	April 15, 2022	\$1,799
Tenure	June 16, 2022	\$1,123
Measure Labs	June 27, 2022	\$2,035
Total Event Permit Fees		\$4,957

EXPENSES

Park Staffing & Security	\$698,609
Activations (e.g., buskers, arts & crafts)	\$77,309
Equipment (e.g., lighting, planters)	\$38,747
Other Expenses (e.g., marketing, uniforms)	\$37,091
Total Expenses	\$851,756

Net Income	\$0
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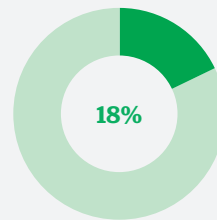
Women- and Minority-owned Business Outreach

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.

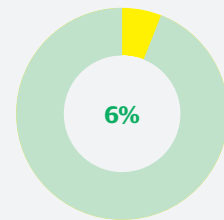


\$48,161
spent on WMBE
6% of all expenses

As programming and activations continued in the parks in winter and spring 2022, a significant amount of expenses were directed toward WMBE artists and vendors.



Overall WMBE Aspirational Goal



January-June 2022 WMBE Outcome

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