



**City of Seattle**  
Central Waterfront Oversight Committee

April 28, 2023

Honorable Bruce Harrell, Mayor  
Honorable Debora Juarez, Council President  
Honorable Lisa Herbold, Council Member,  
Honorable Andrew J. Lewis, Council Member,  
Honorable Tammy J. Morales, Council Member,  
Honorable Teresa Mosqueda, Council Member,  
Honorable Sara Nelson, Council Member,  
Honorable Alex Pedersen, Council Member,  
Honorable Kshama Sawant, Council Member,  
Honorable Dan Strauss, Council Member,

Dear Mayor Harrell and Councilmembers,

Your Central Waterfront Oversight Committee (the "CWOC") is pleased to report that the redevelopment of the Waterfront continues to come to fruition as new portions of Waterfront Park open for operations and management. Consistent with our responsibilities, we have reviewed the proposed Operations Management Agreement (the "Agreement") between Seattle Center, Seattle Parks and Recreation ("SPR"), and Friends of Waterfront Seattle ("Friends") that will soon be subject to City Council review.

Established pursuant to Ordinance 125761 in 2019, CWOC's responsibilities relevant to the development of the Agreement include:

- a. Development of a Performance Standard for ongoing park performance evaluation and incorporate into in the Management Agreement;
- b. Provision of recommendations to the City and SPR regarding special park rules for the Waterfront Park;
- c. Assessment of the readiness of a prospective Operating Partner prior to entering into a Management Agreement as outlined in Ordinance 125761; and
- d. Ensuring that any lessons learned from our experience with the predecessor License Agreement are reflected in the Management Agreement.

As you know from prior reports, the CWOC has fulfilled its initial obligations to prepare for full Waterfront Park operations. Brief summaries of that prior work, all relevant to your consideration of the proposed Agreement, follow:

### Performance Standard

The CWOC conducted a deep analysis of peer national parks in other large cities such as Bryant Park, the Highline, Hudson River Park, The Embarcadero, Klyde Warren Park, as well as our own Seattle Center. This analysis considered maintenance, programming/activation, and public safety. We formed sub-committees and incorporated metrics as prescribed by the City Council to be included in the Performance Standard.

The Performance Standard was developed considering metrics outlined by the City Council in Ordinance 125761, as well as best practices nationally, and a customized park inspection for Waterfront Park. It includes a detailed set of baseline requirements to provide a high-quality park experience. The Performance Standard approved by the CWOC in 2022 will be utilized starting in 2023 to evaluate park performance for both the Seattle Center and Friends in their respective roles and responsibilities.

### Waterfront Park Rules

SPR, Office of the Waterfront and Civic Projects (“OWCP”), Seattle Center and Friends developed recommendations for Waterfront Park Rules (the “Rules”) based on established Seattle Center and SPR rules, carefully and specifically focused on the Waterfront.

The CWOC reviewed and revised the proposed Rules and recommended that SPR adopt them through its administrative rule making process, as provided in SMC 3.02. The SPR Superintendent and the Seattle Park Board of Commissioners adopted the recommended Rules and delegated authority to the Seattle Center Director to amend and implement rules, as necessary.

### Operations Management Agreement between the City and Friends of Waterfront Seattle

An earlier License Agreement between the City and Friends regarding Pier 62 provided the City and CWOC the opportunity to assess the Waterfront Park operations model, which included a joint role of public safety, SPR responsibility for maintenance, and Friends responsibility for park activation and programming.

After careful assessment, the CWOC’s decision to recommend changing the lead city operating department to Seattle Center was made and legislation doing so passed in 2023, delegating authority from SPR to Seattle Center for Waterfront Park operations. As you know, the official change in departments will occur in July, 2023 and aligns with the next agreement with Friends as the Operating Partner.

The OWCP and CWOC have now satisfied the requirements of Ordinance 125761 to determine if Friends were ready to be the long-term partner prior to entering into the Management Agreement and have found that Friends has met all requirements to move forward as the Operating Partner to the City for Waterfront Park operations. They have particularly exceeded expectations in their performance in regard to inclusive programming, cultural events, and outreach.

As the OWCP and Friends negotiated terms for the Agreement, the CWOC has reviewed drafts of the Agreement and provided additional feedback from lessons learned from the License Agreement. We also ensured that the proposed Agreement reflects the new Waterfront Park Rules and the joint public safety model and respects the adopted Performance Standard. As a result, the CWOC approved the basic terms outlined in the Agreement for Waterfront Park operations.

We thank the City for the opportunity to continue serving in this critical role as Waterfront Park operations continue to evolve.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerry Johnson", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Gerry Johnson, Chair  
Central Waterfront Oversight Committee