

# Seattle Parks and Recreation Aquatics Ramp-Up

City Council Public Assets and Homelessness Committee

July 6, 2022

Seattle Parks and Recreation



City of Seattle

# Overview of SPR Aquatics Line of Business



## 2022 Budget Summary:

- \$9.3M: 35% General Fund; 65% Park Fund (fees)
- 48.5 Regular FTE + ~200 year-round temporary employees

## Funded Services (and Summer 2022 Status):

- 8 indoor pools (5 open)
- 2 outdoor pools (open)
- 9 lifeguarded beaches (6 open)
- 22 wading pools (20 open)
- Boat launches - 7 motorized + 20 hand-carry (open)
- 2 small craft boating facilities (open)
- 10 spray parks (9 open)



# Ramping Up Aquatic Services: 2020 to 2022

- **March 2020:** Pools closed to public; hiring freeze in place
- **Summer 2020:** 5 beaches open - August only and within newly designed COVID protocols
- **Fall 2020:** Lifeguard recertification program held for current staff (COVID protocols)
- **Summer 2021:** 6 beaches open; also 11 wading pools, 2 outdoor pools and 2 indoor pools (modified schedules)
- **Fall 2021:** 4 additional indoor pools open (modified schedule); begin offering lifeguard certification classes to public (COVID protocols)
- **Winter 2022:** 7<sup>th</sup> indoor pool opens (modified schedule)
- **Summer 2022:** 6 beaches, 7 pools (2 outdoor pools + 5 indoor), 20 wading pools open



# Summer Aquatics: Staffing

- **Summer Aquatics:** The Aquatics team grows by 200+ seasonal staff each summer (beaches, indoor and outdoor pools, wading pools)
- **Beach Program Deep Dive**
  - **Staffing** (assumes 9 beaches):
    - 1 Beach Program Supervisor
    - 18 Beach Leadership Roles (7-day operations)
    - ~80 temporary Beach Lifeguards
  - **Safety and training:** Beach staff have a higher requirement than pool staff for fitness and swimming strength
  - **Reduced Site Selection Criteria:** Past attendance, geographic distribution, equity, site characteristics



# National Lifeguard Shortage

SPR is part of a national lifeguard shortage

Contributing factors include:

- Consistent with overall labor shortage
  - More employment opportunities at similar pay rates – many with fewer minimum requirements and less responsibility
- Temporary employees sought other roles during pandemic-related closures
- Normal “pipeline” to lifeguard training and employment stalled during COVID
- Despite continuous hiring efforts since fall 2021, current status of SPR Lifeguard roles:
  - Approximately 12 regular vacancies
  - 200+ temporary vacancies

FITNESS + WELL-BEING · Published June 28, 2022 7:00pm EDT  
**Pools close as lifeguard shortage hits American cities this summer**  
*National lifeguard shortage of 2022 leads to pool closures, limited hours*

## National lifeguard shortage felt at local pools

The pandemic paused lifeguard training courses and forced many instructors to find other work

**Half of Phoenix pools to stay closed this summer due to lifeguard shortage**



# Lifeguard Requirements/Recruitment

Lifeguards are SPR employees and meet minimum qualifications:

- Minimum age: 16 years of age
- Pre-employment physical and background check
- American Red Cross Lifeguard Training Course and Certification
- Northwest Lifeguard Skills Test
- Additional training requirements for Beach Lifeguards, leadership positions (post-employment)

Recruitment Efforts:

- Advertising on social media, City website, Washington Recreation and Parks Association, drowning prevention advocacy groups like the Washington State Drowning Prevention Network
- Outreach to high school swim teams
- Advertise and conduct lifeguard training classes (14 since 1/1/22)



# Next Steps

Continue recruitment strategies to seek qualified candidates

Partner with SHDR:

- Longer Term: Review wage study results
- Near Term: Allow hiring at a higher starting rate
- Will continue to explore new ideas, e.g., "Lifeguard Auxiliary"

Continue to ramp up "pipeline" to employment

- Summer Lifeguard Training Team - Mount Baker Beach
- Lifeguard Training at Teen Late Night - Rainier Beach
- Expanding Teen Programs
- Expanding Swim Lesson Program - including Swim Aide Role

Request support in getting the word out...

[www.seattle.gov/parks/about-us/jobs/aquatics-employment-and-training](http://www.seattle.gov/parks/about-us/jobs/aquatics-employment-and-training)







# Questions?

Photo from Opening Weekend 2022 – Colman Pool

