

**From:** [Jones, Garrett](#)  
**To:** [Parks and Recreation; Park Board](#)  
**Cc:** [Mayor's Cabinet; City Council Members and Staff; My Spokane](#)  
**Subject:** Parks & Recreation COVID-19 update  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 5, 2020 1:15:31 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)

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Dear colleagues,

I hope you and your families are healthy and well during this ongoing challenging time.

We remain so grateful for all of you who are keeping green spaces accessible, creating virtual recreation programs, planning for revised summer activities, and doing the important work our community counts on.

As you know, we're continuing to focus on our core service model:

- Employee and citizen safety
- Asset protection
- Garbage/sanitation
- Baseline accounting/payroll

We have such a collaborative spirit in our division. This was highlighted in a couple of recent Spokesman Review stories and photos showing employees from various areas across Parks & Recreation working outside their normal areas. This is just a snapshot of the many people helping in new ways.

- [Park employees help till and rake the flower beds at Manito Park](#)
- [Park employees shift into new roles](#)

Our talented Cable 5 team also [tells our story about protecting park assets during COVID-19](#) – in under 3 minutes! If you haven't seen it yet, please take a moment to watch.

Below this message is an update going out to our community on rolling plans in several areas. As you'll see, May 22 is our next evaluation date, and we'll continue to follow the guidelines and orders from local, state, and national leaders.

Behind the scenes, we are developing thoughtful plans for a summer that's going to look very different. With limited resources in staff and budget, plus additional safety measures to implement, we're looking to make data-driven decisions about what programs and facilities to operate. In addition to analyzing past attendance, costs, and staffing, we also want to hear from the community. What do they want and need from Parks & Recreation this summer? A survey is below, and information gathered will help inform our decisions.

Thank you for your ongoing role in providing the community what they need during this time. We are so fortunate to have this team. Please continue to take care of yourselves, your families, and each other.

Garrett

## Public message

We hope this update finds you healthy and well. We'd like to provide information on current impacts to Parks & Recreation spaces and programs, and invite you to share ways we can support your summer recreation in a survey below.

On May 1, Governor Inslee announced Washington's phased approach to re-opening. [View a chart of the phases](#). Phase 1 begins May 5, and allows golf courses to open with COVID-19 protocols in place. The dates to move into Phase 2, 3, and 4 are not known at this time. Most of our Recreation and Riverfront programs require Phase 3 and 4 status to become operational.

### Current impacts to Parks & Recreation, as of May 5

**Recreation programs:** Recreation programs scheduled to occur on or before May 31 will either be cancelled or postponed. This includes outdoor programs, adult and youth sports, Corbin Art Center classes/camps, personal interest classes, and Therapeutic Recreation Services. We will re-assess summer programs on May 22.

Participants scheduled for activities from now through May 31 will be offered a credit on their account. If you have questions, please call us at 311 (outside the city, dial 509.755.2489) and we will be happy to find the best option for your needs.

**Parks, trails, and natural areas:** These spaces are accessible, while practicing social distancing. Play structures and dog parks remain closed. Amenities like basketball courts, tennis courts, disc golf courses and similar are accessible only for recreation with those in your household unit (parent/child shooting hoops, for example), but closed to pick-up games and gatherings of any kind. Please do not attend park and natural areas if you experience symptoms or have been in contact with someone experiencing symptoms; our staff will do the same.

**Restrooms:** Many restrooms in parks are closed. We unfortunately do not have the resources to disinfect multiple times per day the restrooms across our nearly 90 City parks. We are exploring portable restrooms in the most popular destinations. We're doing our best, with about 1/3 of our normal seasonal staff, to care for park properties in ways that ensure visitor safety, garbage removal, and asset protection.

**Golf:** Golf courses re-opened Tuesday, May 5 under revised protocols. [Read more details](#).

**Aquatics:** Pre-season lap swimming at Witter pool (normally runs May 4 – early June at Witter only) is cancelled, due to the uncertain nature and timing of re-opening facilities (Phase 3), limited staff, and budget impacts from COVID-19. We are continuing to assess the regular aquatics season (mid-June – August) with our regional partners and will share updates.

**Riverfront attractions:** Riverfront attractions remain closed under the Governor's Stay Home, Stay Healthy order. The Visit Spokane center is also closed. The park's open space remains available for public use. There is limited restroom availability.

**Riverfront-hosted events and activities:** Riverfront events and activities scheduled to occur before or on May 31 are either postponed or cancelled. This includes Riverfront Barre Sculpt, Spin, and Story Time at the Carrousel. We will re-evaluate events and activities scheduled for June on May 22.

**Indoor and outdoor event space rentals:** We will unfortunately not be able to honor

reservations between now and May 31. We will be happy to tentatively hold dates for events scheduled to occur in June and beyond. This includes Riverfront Park, Corbin Art Center, and Finch Arboretum's Woodland Center.

Staff is working with event organizers to re-schedule May events and create contingency plans. We will re-evaluate June events on May 22. If you would like to postpone your event or reservation, please call 311 (outside the city, dial 509.755.2489), and we'll help you coordinate.

**Community & Senior Centers:** Centers operate independently. Please contact the centers directly for questions. [Contact information for Senior and Community Centers.](#)

We anticipate additional changes as the situation evolves, and will communicate with you when those occur.

### Summer Activities: we want to hear from you

We are exploring ways to safely offer summer camp programs, recreation classes, and Riverfront community engagement activities. All programs would be in alignment with orders from local and state leadership, and the Spokane Regional Health District.

We want to hear what types of programs might be of most interest to you during these unique times. We know there may be an increased focus on child care options and program costs. Like many, we'll be operating this summer with limited resources and will need to make decisions about what programs to offer. We'd love your input.

Please take a few minutes to share your greatest interests and needs by taking this quick three-minute survey.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6YQSSKL>

We appreciate your time and feedback, and hope to see you – at a distance! – this summer.

### Next steps

We love that parks can be a reprieve, and we hope to be able to keep them accessible. We appreciate the patience and understanding of citizens; we are adapting as a community and will continue to care for our beautiful properties with a limited staff, focused on core services of safety, asset protection, and sanitation.

We will continue to follow the recommendations of local and state public health experts in collaboration with the City of Spokane leadership. As the situation and information evolves, we will continue to communicate changes. Together, we are #InlandStrong.

Thanks,

**Garrett Jones, PLA** | Director of Parks and Recreation | City of Spokane Parks & Recreation  
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