

OREGON SUMMER FELLOWSHIP PROJECT BRIEF

Playground Closures Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) & Infographic

Project Dates: July/2024 – September/2024, Maggie Podesta – Oregon Summer Fellow

PROJECT GOAL

The project goal was to establish a clear standard operating procedure, with an accompanying infographic, for Professional Services and Maintenance Services (PRMS) staff to follow when performing and managing playground closures throughout the Portland Parks and Recreation (PP&R) system, whether the closure was partial, permanent, or temporary.

TAKE-AWAYS

- A well-documented SOP serves as a valuable training tool for new employees, providing them with clear guidance on procedures and expectations without the need for constant supervision.
- PRMs staff can complete tasks more efficiently without needing to seek clarification or reinvent procedures each time an issue arises.

CHALLENGES

Several challenges emerged while completing the Playground Closures SOP project. An initial challenge was developing a rudimentary knowledge of the PRMS workgroup to understand who I would be

interviewing and their roles within the organization.

An additional barrier was navigating the time constraints of PRMS personnel to schedule interviews and gather the necessary information for the SOP and infographic.

The final hurdle involved co-creating an infographic to accompany the SOP, despite having no prior experience in developing this type of tool. I also had to learn how to use an unfamiliar computer application to collaborate with my field supervisor to complete the task.

STRATEGY

To overcome the challenges outlined in the previous section, I employed several strategies, including the following:

- Studied PP&R's organizational chart and reviewed the internal newsletter, PayDirt, to gain a better understanding of the PRMS team and their work responsibilities.

- To address employee time constraints, I inquired about preferred interview meeting times and modalities that worked best for staff schedules. For example, I offered to meet staff on-site at the Mt. Tabor Maintenance Yard, allowing them to avoid the hassle of logging into computers and locating a Zoom link. This “meet them where they are at” strategy showed respect for their limited time and increased their willingness to participate in the interview process for the SOP.
- To familiarize myself with creating an infographic and utilizing a new computer application, I researched best practices for infographic design and dedicated time to experimenting with the application.

RESULTS

- Collected responses to essential interview questions from PRMS staff, ensuring I gathered the necessary information to compile the Playground Closures SOP.
- Co-developed a comprehensive Playground Closures SOP that outlined clear steps and guidelines for PRMS staff to follow during partial, permanent, or temporary playground closures.
- Incorporated feedback from PP&R leadership to refine and enhance both the SOP and accompanying infographic, ensuring the final version met organizational standards and addressed key concerns.
- Co-designed an infographic to visually complement the Playground Closures SOP, providing a quick-reference tool that summarizes the key steps and processes in an accessible format.