



City of Portland, Oregon
Bureau of Development Services
Land Use Services
FROM CONCEPT TO CONSTRUCTION

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Briefing

DISCUSSION MEMO

Date: July 7, 2020
To: Historic Landmarks Commission & Design Commission
From: Arthur Graves, Design / Historic Review Team
Arthur.Graves@portlandoregon.gov
Re: South Park Blocks Master Plan
Briefing Memo – July 14, 2020

For briefing materials, please see the South Park Blocks Master Plan – Draft Preferred Design webpage here: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/2aa14af546b543d99225798af7c367ae>

Representatives from Portland Parks & Recreation (PPR) will provide additional information and receive your feedback on July 14th. PPR was previously before both Commissions at a joint hearing on this topic on December 5, 2019.

The proposed South Park Blocks Master Plan was sponsored through a donation to the Parks Foundation, resulting from LU 15-281248 DZM MS which allowed for additional floor area at Broadway Tower through a Central City Master Plan.

The Draft Preferred Design is divided into the following sections: Introduction, Location and Context, Block-by-Block Tour, Tree Succession Strategy, Comment Survey, Next Steps, and Additional Resources. The information online provides some information about existing elements and proposed changes. This is most clearly described in the Block-by-Block Tour.

Regarding the existing character of the park blocks, Staff notes that the Downtown Neighborhood Association has commissioned a National Register nomination for the South Park Blocks; this nomination will be presented to the Historic Landmarks Commission later this summer prior to its consideration by the State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation in September. Because the South Park Blocks are not yet listed on the National Register, they are not yet included within the Historic Resource Protection overlay zone; once listed the blocks would only be subject to Demolition Review. They are located within the Design overlay zone, however, per 33.420.045.I, development associated with Parks and Open Areas uses that do not require a conditional use review are exempt from Design Review.

Potential changes to the blocks vary between minimal such as maintenance measures to more impactful changes such as the introduction of new elements and alterations to the circulation patterns. One major element to be accommodated with the master plan area is the Green Loop which is

proposed to be accommodated on the west side of the park blocks and would result in reconfiguration and paving of the Park Avenue (West) sidewalks, increasing their width from 5' to a 12'-6" wide path to be shared with bicycles. Area dedicated to automobile traffic would be reduced to 12' wide for 6 of the 8 blocks exposed to vehicle traffic on the west side.

Staff requests the Commission's comments on the following:

- What tangible and intangible elements of the park blocks existing character are worthy of retention or preservation?
- Is the proposed level of impact to existing elements appropriate?
- Is the proposed configuration of the Green Loop appropriate for this location?
- What other questions should PPR consider as they move forward with the master plan?

Please contact me with any questions or concerns.

The following was provided by the applicant for Commissioners to review prior to the July 14, 2020 briefing:

[StoryMap that was created for the Online Open House](#). It walks the participant through the draft preferred design.

The applicant added that this website works best with Chrome and Safari internet browsers and an Ad Blocking software disabled. It will work on a smart phone, tablet, or computer.

The presentation will provide more content and questions specific for the Commissions.