

From: [Robert Gelpke](#)
To: [Wheeler, Mayor](#)
Cc: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: South Park Blocks Master Plan Proposal: Net Loss of Many Trees!
Date: Saturday, June 19, 2021 10:04:01 AM

Greeting Mayor Wheeler,

The South Parks Blocks Master Plan Proposal will soon be before you and will demand a lot of very careful consideration as it represents a significant decision point for City policy and ultimately test how serious we are about 'our trees'.

The Portland Parks and Recreation Street Inventory report: Downtown Neighborhood, dated November 2013 shows that tree canopy only covers 17% of downtown. This is significantly below Portland's city-wide canopy of 28%. Any further erosion of those numbers certainly doesn't serve any interest, except a narrow slice of special interests.

Trees also contribute directly to the health and well-being of all of us by decreasing carbon. A mature elm store 4700 pounds of it while sequestering 87.5. With this in mind, the obvious concentration of mature deciduous trees in South Park Blocks has earned it the title of 'lungs of our city'.

Evergreens should simply not be part of any City park as they are inefficient carbon cleaners (only 10% that of deciduous), rob the park of usable surface area (since lower branches go to the ground), grow to enormous heights, and permanently shade (not welcome during Portland winters).

Our community efforts should focus on saving our trees!

This proposal will eliminate well over 20% of the mature trees in South Park Blocks.

The basic question would be; what is the NET loss of mature trees?

Are we serious about saving 'our trees' or are we headed down the other path of 'updating/modernizing' the area to address a non-existent 'problem' and obligate the City for tens of millions of dollars in that process?

My vote is for the trees.

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