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To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#); [Wheeler, Mayor](#); [Commissioner Rubio](#); [Commissioner Ryan Office](#); [Commissioner Hardesty](#); [Commissioner Mapps](#); [Hart, Barbara](#); [White, Tate](#)
Subject: South Park Blocks Master Plan
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There is no place on earth like the forests of Cascadia. It is our pleasure and responsibility to value and protect them for the entire globe and for our city.

I am opposed to the South Park Blocks Master Plan as presently proposed for a number of reasons but the primary ones are its disregard for the value of the mature elms and the denigration of the park blocks as a future historical district to be preserved.

To the contrary, the underlying premise of the plan is that the mature elms are dying/dangerous and there is no real value to retaining them. There is also a further layer of shame that the layout of the park is not something to be cherished but rather insulting, outdated and European. Some of these premises are stated overtly, others less so.

Why should we preserve the mature elms and the park as laid out?

We know that Morgan Hollen, who is not an arborist to always find trees in good condition, gave the opinion that give or take six trees are not healthy. Deal with the six trees.

It is, of course, necessary to come to grips with our past and our future. This does not give the present city the right to simply destroy something of beauty because of a current and frankly, selective iteration on equity. So for example, the principle of "heat equity" - the cooling from these trees in an area of density and high percentage of affordable housing is not even mentioned.

It is especially galling when the plan does not even acknowledge that this is what it is doing, but rather tries to focus on "the canopy." It professes to be protecting "our trees" by managing the mature elms and removing them and by spacing them out because apparently the way it has been is suddenly not now healthy for trees which have stood there much longer than any of us have been alive and which through their maturity are maintaining carbon storage as only they can do. Replacing trees, even native trees - the strategy they are promoting isn't even working now because well, those mature elms are definitely causing the failure. But removing more mature elms will make it all work better, you'll see?

Clearly some of us have severe doubts about the plan and the people and procedures to implement it. I do think now that we are awake to what is afoot in the park blocks, we who have loved the park blocks our entire lives and are friends of all trees, will be watching and participating from this moment forward.

Thank you for your attention.

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