

Mayor Wheeler, City Commissioners
City of Portland
1221 SW 4th Ave.
Portland, Oregon 97204

July 1, 2021

Dear Mayor Wheeler and City Commissioners,

Thank you for considering these comments in reference to the South Park Blocks Master Plan.

Like many other residents in Portland, I love this stretch of downtown. I enjoy the space for walking and sitting that was intentionally planned with trees and people in mind. The new South Parks Master Plan has generated quite a bit of conflicting scenarios and outcomes. While I do not have the expertise or even the desire at this point to comment on the plan in its entirety, I want to share my views about the component I care most about- the trees.

I support a plan that addresses the preservation and maintenance of the existing canopy and the intentional replanting, placement and stewardship of future trees along the South Park Blocks. The wonderful canopy that American elms provide graces the South Parks Blocks. Unfortunately, many of the elms are in decline due to Dutch elm disease and age. It is time for a succession plan to be developed and implemented to retain the social and environmental benefits that trees, particularly large form ones, offer to everyone. From reviewing the public documents and speaking with the Urban Forestry Commission and City Forester, this Master Plan reflects an approach that is based on the best available science and arboricultural practices. The Plan takes into account the historical significance of the site, and reflects a future vision that is welcoming and accessible to all. With this understanding, I support the Master Plan and its long -term tree canopy goals.

As you listen to the presentation by staff, I urge you to ask many questions about the engagement process, tree succession practices, and more so that the community may also learn from the professionals who led this important effort. This project should be celebrated and supported by Portlanders as a way to ensure a future where our iconic linear parkway offers shade, beauty and respite for all.

Thank you for your service and for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

Meryl A. Redisch
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