

From: [Rudolph Westerband](#)
To: [Wheeler, Mayor](#); [Commissioner Rubio](#); [Commissioner Ryan Office](#); [Commissioner Hardesty](#); [Commissioner Mapps](#)
Cc: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: South Park Blocks Master Plan
Date: Monday, May 31, 2021 2:46:16 PM

Dear Mayor and Commissioners,

I live in the downtown. It is my hope that you and the City Council will reject the South Park Blocks Master Plan because it is not needed, it is misguided, and it is destructive.

The South Park Blocks were not created as an urban playground. Portland's planners and leaders at the time imagined and created a nature reserve right in the downtown. The Park serves residents, nearby businesses and visitors to Portland's central core as a peaceful and natural refuge from the concrete metropolis that surrounds it. It's where we residents go to escape our apartments and the press of nearby traffic and business activity. Portland has world-wide respect for the way its planners successfully integrated commerce and residential life. The South Park Blocks are a major part of that achievement. The Park is a prime example of the kind of balance between nature and concrete for which Portland is admired and its planners and leaders have been lauded for their far-sightedness.

The South Park Blocks Master Plan would jeopardize all of that. Without plainly saying so, it would reduce the number of the Park's magnificent deciduous trees by as much as 25%. Even healthy trees that are far from approaching the end of their natural life would be culled. They and the canopy they provide would be sacrificed in order to lay new concrete for what the Master Plan dubiously calls "construction".

It recommends the elimination in Blocks 7-12 of separated pedestrian paths, replacing them and the trees, grass and other natural growth between them with one wide expanse of concrete. And it would reduce the size of the park by constricting its boundaries to create a path for bicycles, which it ironically calls the Green Loop.

Despite the Plan's gloss and length, it does not contain a concise and plainly worded description of a substantial public need to be served by this massive project. Nor does it explain why you should authorize what would have to be a large expenditure of public funds, at a time when so many of our citizens are going without adequate food, shelter and other basic rudiments of life, and so many of the city's walls are defaced by graffiti. Sheltering the homeless and doing something about the graffiti, and filling the potholes which burden our streets are the kind of real problems the city has on which public money should be spent.

The South Park Blocks are Portland's Central Park. It is the diamond in the rough. It only needs to be maintained and kept clean to be enjoyed as its creators intended.

If it ain't broken, why break it? I urge the City Council to reject the South Park Blocks Master Plan.

Respectfully submitted,

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