



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

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## Briefing

### DISCUSSION MEMO

**Date:** March 9, 2023  
**To:** Historic Landmarks Commission  
**From:** Hillary Adam, Design & Historic Review Team  
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**Re:** Briefing – Lighting in Historic Parks  
March 13, 2023

This memo is regarding the upcoming Briefing on March 13, 2023, regarding Lighting in Historic Parks. The following supporting documents are available as follows:

- Presentation by Portland Parks & Recreation – attached
- [Link to Light Pole Safety Project webpage](#)

#### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Portland Parks & Recreation is proposing the removal of several light poles in multiple public parks due to safety concerns. Some of these parks are identified as historic, and in some cases, the light poles are identified as contributing features. This is more specifically described below.

#### AFFECTED HISTORIC RESOURCES

The following Parks are either designated as historic or are located within a historic district and have light poles identified for removal:

- Irving Park, noncontributing to the Irvington Historic District; therefore no historic light poles are located in this park
- Ladd's Addition Parks, contributing to the Ladd's Addition Historic District. The nomination notes: "The [Circle] park has five street lamps with concrete bases and clustered globes: one is located in the center of the circle and the rest are centered between each [planter] bed on the north, south, east and west edges."
- Lair Hill Park, contributing to the South Portland Historic District; the lighting system is not specifically mentioned in the nomination.
- Mt. Tabor Park, individually listed in the National Register, with "historic lighting system" identified as a contributing aspect of the "site" which is a contributing feature to the district.

## REVIEW PROCESS

Removal of light poles identified as contributing, such as are located at Mt. Tabor Park and in the Ladd's Addition Parks, is subject to Demolition Review, however, they may also be exempt from Demolition Review if the *Bureau of Development Services requires demolition due to an immediate danger to the health, safety, or welfare of the occupants, the owner, or that of the general public, as stated in Section 29.40.030 of Title 29, Property Maintenance Regulations*. Such a determination has not yet been made. Removal of noncontributing light poles, such as are located within Irving Park and Lair Hill Park, is exempt from Demolition Review and Historic Resource Review.

Additionally, installation of new poles would be subject to Historic Resource Review within Ladd's Addition Parks, Lair Hill Park, and Mt. Tabor Park, but not within Irving Park because it is noncontributing and the installation of light poles does not require a building, site, or zoning permit.

**FUTURE HISTORIC RESOURCE REVIEW APPROVAL CRITERIA:** The future approval criteria is different for each of the three parks that would require Historic Resource Review:

- Ladd's Addition Conservation District Design Guidelines for the Ladd's Addition Parks
- South Portland Historic District Design Guidelines for Lair Hill Park
- 33.846.060.G (1-10) Other historic approval criteria for Mt. Tabor Park

## STAFF COMMENTS

Parks staff has indicated that of the 216 light poles to be removed at Mt Tabor Park, 58 are from the historic period. Four poles are indicated to be removed from Ladd's Circle Park but the description of such poles in the nomination does not appear to match the fixtures that are currently located at the park. This appears to be the extent of the historic light poles proposed for removal.

With regard to the proposed replacement fixtures, the new light poles are very similar to those proposed for removal. Therefore, such a replacement may be found to meet general approval criteria with regard to compatibility.