

July 20, 2023

via email: dan.ryan@portland.us.gov

Commissioner Dan Ryan
City of Portland
1221 SW 4th Avenue, Room 240,
Portland, OR 97204

RE: DARCELLE XV PLAZA (formerly known as O’Bryant Square).

Commissioner Ryan:

I am writing as a Portland resident that has been actively engaged in the development of over \$1.5 billion of commercial real estate in downtown Portland and volunteer on several City of Portland Advisory Committees since 2008.

Darcelle XV Plaza (the “Park”) is located within three blocks of over \$1 billion of commercial development including the Block 216/Ritz-Carlton mixed use tower (full disclosure: I am owner’s representative on all aspects of this project including development) the Eleven West mixed-use tower and renovation of several historic properties in the West end. This is the epicenter for the rebirth of downtown Portland, and once the Block 216/Ritz-Carlton and Eleven West buildings open, there will be an additional 3,000 residents and daytime workers located in the West End.

The Park is also located directly on the Green Loop and is near ten (10) existing hotels that are key to the tourism business which once employed over 40,000 Portlanders before the pandemic. This is a KEY tourist area.

I strongly urge you to include the following aspects in the Darcelle XV Plaza’s design to include the following:

Fenced in Park for Safety and Security of Housed and Houseless

There is an old saying that still holds true today: “Good fences make good neighbors”. I provide “simple” design to allow future change based on unknown future demand by both Portland residents and tourists. A fence will give City the ability to secure Park at night to avoid bad behaviors to occur after park hours (want to avoid past mistakes of O’Bryant Square).

Off Leash Dog Section

Portland has one of the highest dog ownerships of major US cities. A simple off leash agility park would allow both Portland residents and tourists to City to bring their dog to the Park. This also becomes something tourists will enjoy watching, which I observed in several well designed and run City Parks including Madison Square Park in NYC (which is also adjacent to the Ritz-Carlton Nomad hotel which opened July 2022 in Manhattan; <https://madisonsquarepark.org/park/visit/>) . Madison Square Park was ranked the #1 dog park in NYC.

No Food Carts or Trucks at First.. until market demand warrants more

In addition to the Ankeny Food Cart pod, the SW 6th and Harvey Milk food cart pod will open later this summer to 30 local vendors. The Block 216, Ritz-Carlton Food Hall, known as Flock (<https://www.flock-pdx.com/>), will open in December 2023 and include ten local curated food vendors. These forty total net new food carts will quadruple the number of food carts in the west end. Darcelle XV can provide seating to accommodate these food carts. Assuming there is enough demand to accommodate additional carts, re-visit potential of addition food cart in or around park at a future date. Flooding the market with too many food vendors will benefit no one.

Flexibility to Leverage Optimal Programming for the Four Downtown Parks

Having a more “generic” re-opening of the Park so that true demand can be ascertained will allow a higher probability of success and allow Portland Parks & Recreation to best utilize the four downtown Parks (Ankeny, Darcelle XV, Director’s and Pioneer Courthouse Square) to maximize use by Portlanders and tourism which provides millions in tax revenue on an annual basis to City and County.

Greatly appreciate all the hard work you, Randy Gragg and Executive Director Adena Long to create a Plaza worthy of the Legend and great contributions of Darcelle XV that signifies the progress we have made as a city in embracing diversity and embracing LGBTQ+ history and serve as a reminder of our shared journey towards inclusivity and acceptance

Best Regards,



Brian M. Owendoff

Principal & CEO

BMO Commercial Real Estate, LLC

CC: Randy Gragg, Executive Director Portland Parks Foundation (rgragg@portlandpf.org)
Adena Long, Director, Portland Parks & Recreation
Mayor Ted Wheeler
Commissioner Carmen Rubio
Commissioner Rene Gonzalez
Commissioner Mingus Mapps