

Portland City Council Agenda Written Testimony
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1	Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
	Margaux Mennesson, Board Member, The Street Trust	Support		Yes	03/04/25 1:24 PM



March 3, 2025

To: Portland Mayor and City Council

Cc: Sarah Iannarone, Executive Director

Re: SUPPORT Steel Bridge SkatePark

Dear City of Portland Elected Officials:

The Street Trust is an advocacy organization representing street users from across Greater Portland regardless of mode. We work to break political gridlock and win policy and investments that save lives, reduce barriers, and expand mobility and opportunities to the people and neighborhoods our current system neglects.

I am writing on behalf of The Street Trust in strong support of the Steel Bridge Skatepark project. As a member of the Steel Bridge Skatepark Coalition, we recognize this project as a critical investment in public space, youth safety, and community vitality.

In addition to serving on the board of The Street Trust, I am also a member of the Steel Bridge Skatepark Advisory Committee. I am a longtime skateboarder, public sector professional, mom to two young skaters, aged 10 and 7, and active community volunteer in Portland. When I started skateboarding at age 14 in 1999, I was one of the few girl skateboarders in my hometown. From that age, skateboarding taught me that if you want something, you have to work for it and you can't let other people intimidate you or scare you away. I now see the current generation of youth in Portland, including my own kids, learning the same lessons about resilience, confidence, pride, and motivation through skateboarding. These skills have benefited me professionally and socially and have helped me overcome enormous obstacles throughout my life.

Over the last few years, I have seen Portland's skate scene grow in creative, inspiring, and inclusive ways. I've traveled with my skateboard around the country and the world, and really believe that Portland is positioned to become a world class skate city - and the Steel Bridge Skatepark is a cornerstone project to make that happen.

The Street Trust strongly supports this project. We are happy to lend our capacity and expertise to ensure that from the earliest planning and design phases, cleanup and public safety strategies are integrated, not as an afterthought, but as a foundational element of the project.

Beyond its local impact, this skatepark represents an opportunity to leverage public dollars effectively. By engaging grantmakers and external funders, the City can ensure every PBOT dollar stretches further, maximizing the park's potential without relying solely on City funds.

This is about more than just skateboarding: this project offers a proven youth safety and crime prevention strategy. Skateparks provide young people with a structured, healthy, and positive alternative to harmful activities. They also offer critical public health benefits by encouraging movement, social engagement, and a sense of belonging.

At a time when at-risk community members need safe spaces and opportunities for joyful activity, the Steel Bridge Skatepark can be a sanctuary, transforming an underutilized space currently attracting antisocial behavior into a hub of energy, inclusion, and creativity.

We urge you to support this project and ensure its success by prioritizing funding for safety programs from the outset, securing diverse funding sources for capital improvements, and recognizing the immense social and public health benefits it will bring to our city.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Margaux Mennesson

Margaux Mennesson
Board Treasurer The Street Trust