



# City of Portland Design Commission and Historic Landmarks Commission

## Briefing

### MEMORANDUM

**Date:** November 27, 2019  
**To:** Portland Historic Landmarks Commission and Portland Design Commission  
**From:** Arthur Graves, Design Review  
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**Re:** South Park Blocks Master Plan – December 05, 2019 Briefing

The purpose of this Briefing is to seek input from the Historic Landmarks Commission and the Design Commission regarding the proposed goals, objectives and design schemes of the proposal thus far. Input is also requested from the Commissions as the South Park Blocks may pursue Historic Landmark Designation.

The South Park Blocks are currently zoned OSd (adjacent vacated rights-of-way are zoned CXd), depending on the final design and potential historic designations Design Review and/or Historic Resource Review would require the Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines to be met, Portland Zoning Code 33.846.060.G guidelines would be required to be met for Historic Resource Review if the area achieves a historic designation.

The proposal / scope is to establish a master plan for the 12 greenspace blocks that define the South Park Blocks: the area between SW Park West and SW Park East; and SW Salmon Street (to the north) SW Jackson Street (to the south). The project is also seeking Historic Landmark designation.

The concepts broadly attempt to respond to the following three predominant surrounding uses: cultural institution; mixed-use multi-story residential and religious, and the Portland State University Campus.

The objectives of the master plan are to:

1. Preserve the rich character, pattern and design traditions;
2. Enrich the park experience through cultural events, performing arts and visual arts;
3. Provide periodic flexible use space for events, farmers markets, fairs, exhibits and live performances;
4. Develop and expand specific program of appropriate elements of attractions for all ages, abilities, races, genders, socioeconomic and cultural groups to gather and help activate the park blocks;
5. Consider methods to increase the sustainability and resiliency of park resources in terms of their design and long-term care;
6. Consider micro-climate and user comfort in all seasons;
7. Preserve and improve wildlife habitat and urban forest canopy over time;
8. Improve maintenance and operations;
9. Improve the physical and perception of public safety;
10. Understand the specifics of PSU campus needs, identity, programming and circulation patterns of the blocks surrounded by their campus;
11. Consider the need for a large public gathering hub in terms of emergency;
12. Improve circulation and physical safety at streets and street crossings;
13. Explore possible street closures to expand usable open space as the city grows and becomes denser;
14. Support multi-modal connections;
15. Accommodate the Green Loop through north-south connections.

To date, four inter-agency TAC meetings have been held on the proposal reviewing: proposed goals, objectives and design schemes.

Initial staff concerns include:

- Lack of integration with, or incorporation of, the North Park Blocks into the designs and Historic Landmarks designation
- Design impacts greatly altering the continuity of the South Park Blocks.
- Impacts to the Parks by the proposed Greenloop.
- Design schemes that propose the removal and/or alteration to the existing rose gardens.

Attached is a packet describing work thus far, including: site analysis, historical analysis, and three design schemes (*Emerald Arrow* Concept, *Braided Districts* Concept and *Mirrored Chain* Concept).

For more information, please see the South Park Blocks Master Plan:

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/parks/78629>.

Please contact me with any questions.

Attachments:

South Park Blocks Master Plan Update – Design Concepts: December 05, 2019

Downtown Neighborhood Association letter: November 27, 2019