

From: [John Thompson](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: written testimony 5/12/2021 City Council Agenda Item 343 Construction of Forest Park Entry Project
Date: Tuesday, May 11, 2021 12:57:11 PM
Attachments: [Xfinity Connect Re Fwd Fw Forest Park Parking Lot Project Printout.pdf](#)
[Firelane 1 map and pictures\(1\).pdf](#)

This letter is being submitted as public testimony in reference to city council agenda item 343 Construction of Forest Park Entry Project.

I would like to draw to the attention of City Council grave concerns as articulated by Representative Mitch Greenlick in a letter to Adena Long in April 2020, about the Forest Park Entrance Phase 1 project. These concerns are shared by many Forest Park advocates and neighbors. Representative Greenlick was instrumental in acquiring state funding being used for this project. Please see attached.

Phase 1 will fund repair of a short uphill segment of Firelane 1 while providing no funding for repair of the long transverse section that is crucial for access by fire trucks in the event of major Forest Fire. In discussion of this site as a Regional Trailhead, the 1995 Forest Park Natural Resources Management Plan identified repair of Firelane 1 as a necessary part of creating a trailhead at this location. 26 years later, situated across an active landslide zone, the firelane is so degraded that in many sections it is no more than a single track trail. The minimum standard for firelanes in Forest Park is 12 feet wide.

Increased recreational pressure on Firelane 1 as a result of the 30 car parking lot will accelerate the degradation of this already compromised firelane. During the fire emergency in fall of 2021 there was a fire in Forest Park near Germantown road that required assistance from a second fire truck to be extinguished. Fortunately the fire was close to road access. The risk of catastrophic fire in Forest Park is real. I ask City Council to budget for repair of Firelane 1 as Amanda Fritz requested in 2018 before building the parking lot. Let's not exchange one environmental catastrophe for another.

Sincerely,
John J Thompson
Portland, OR

190404**John Thompson <jthompson47@comcast.net>**

5/11/2021 12:27 PM

Re: Fwd: Fw: Forest Park Parking Lot Project

To John Thompson <jthompson47@comcast.net>

From: Rep Greenlick <Rep.MitchGreenlick@oregonlegislature.gov>**To:** " cityofportlandparksdirector@portland.gov" <cityofportlandparksdirector@portland.gov>**Cc:** John Thompson <jthompson47@comcast.net>**Date:** April 28, 2020 at 1:41 PM**Subject:** Fw: Forest Park Parking Lot Project

I have received the attached message from my constituent, John Thompson. While I have generally remained in support of this project, his message raises significant concerns. Would you help me understand the impact the currently designed project has on the safety of Forest Park? We should be very careful about degrading the safety of the park. Has there been an environmental impact study on the effects of Phase 1? Are we really ready to go? I am reaching out to you because I understand Elizabeth is leaving the project. Help!

Mitch

From: John Thompson <jthompson47@comcast.net>**Sent:** Monday, April 27, 2020 3:19 PM**To:** Mitch Greenlick <greenlick.rep@state.or.us>**Subject:** Forest Park Parking Lot Project

Dear Mitch,

I hope you and your family are well. Catherine and I are grateful for your years of service in the legislature, particularly considering how contentious that has been recently. Hopefully in leaving you can enjoy a lower level of conflict.

I have contacted you in the past about the Forest Park Visitor Center and Nature Area and you understandably have felt that what happens next is out of your hands. I wanted to follow up with some new developments that raise concerns and I am hoping you might be willing to communicate to our new Parks Director, Adena Long, about them.

Recently Adena Long sent a letter to you describing the planned start of phase 1 in 2021, which would be to build a 30 car parking lot and bus turn around at the St Helen's property. The letter, which is duplicated on the Parks Website states there will be widening and regrading of Firelane 1 and signage for the pedestrian and cycling trails.

What the letter failed to elaborate are the following.

* The environmental review for this property is limited to the parking lot. Although we have opposed the Visitor center at this site for a number of reasons, to embark on a project of this nature without acquiring the necessary waivers to build in a wetland by a stream for the whole project seems ill advised.

190404

* The plan to repair the firelane is limited to the portion on this small property, not the entire length of Firelane 1 which rises 600 feet and traverses a mile to reach the Forest.

* There are currently no other trails from this site other than the firelane and the city engineers who reviewed the project determined that the original multiuser trail envisioned for this property could not be built due to environmental impact.

The concern I am writing to you about today is the importance of Firelane 1 for access to Forest park in the event of a fire. After the Eagle Creek fire we know that no forest is safe and firelanes play a critical role in responding. Firelane 1 is the only firelane in Forest Park that runs across the base of the Forest. All others run from top to bottom of the ridge and are considered less useful in the event of a forest fire. Firelane 1 is in terrible condition. In some spots it is only about 3 feet wide due to small landslides that have occurred. A parking lot adjacent to the base will lead to accelerated degradation because of increased foot and bike traffic. Although City Council acknowledged that Firelane 1 needs repair in 2018, there is no budget to make repairs. Elizabeth Kennedy Wong, who is managing this project confirmed that repair to the firelane is not part of this project and is not under her purview. To make matters worse there are homeless camps below Firelane 1, increasing the likelihood that a fire could be started. A fireman from station 1 told us that they respond to smoldering ground fires resulting from abandoned campfires in Forest park with some regularity and must carry fire fighting equipment on their backs.

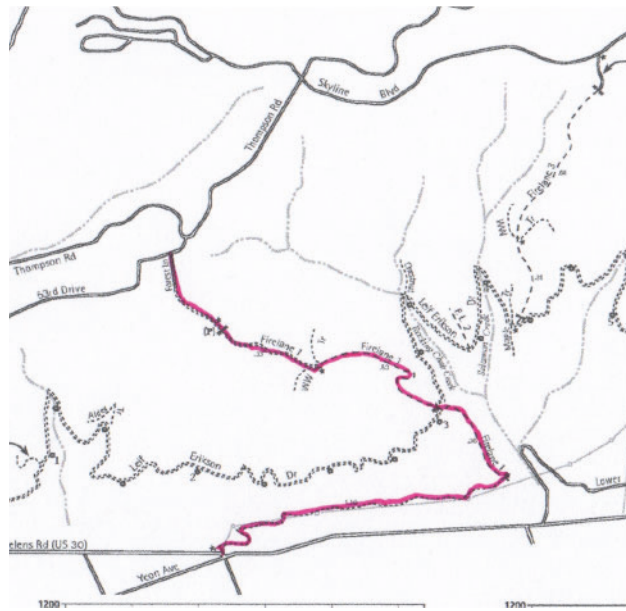
Please look at the attached document with a map of Firelane 1, some photos taken in 2017 of the Firelane (which remains unchanged), and a picture of a nearby homeless camp. I don't know whether you feel it would be appropriate, but I was wondering if you might be willing to suggest to Adena Long that repairs to Firelane 1 should be a prerequisite to building a parking lot at that location? Given your prior support and the State funding you secured, I was hoping your letter would have influence in their decision making.

Thanks for your consideration.

Best regards,

John

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- Firelane 1 map and pictures(1).pdf (1 MB)



From: [lark brandt](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: Visitors Center
Date: Tuesday, May 11, 2021 1:49:26 PM

To Portland City Council, Mayor Wheeler and Portland Parks Department:

No way should you be spending money to build a “visitors center” anywhere in Forest Park until you have initiated the WILDLIFE STUDY of the animals and plants in the park, mandated 25 years ago. Not to mention the repair of Firelane 1 and hiring more park rangers to protect the park from fires and other human-caused damage.

If the City of Portland bought a polluted lot the remediation should be out of the City’s budget, not at the expense of Forest Park. Thank you.

Lark Brandt
33405 SW Cook Rd.
Hillsboro, OR

From: [Marcy Houle](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#); [Wheeler, Mayor](#); [Lee, Bobby](#); [Commissioner Rubio](#); [Miranda, Adriana](#); [Commissioner Mapps](#); [Meyer, Katie](#); [Commissioner Ryan Office](#); [Torres, Kellie](#); [Commissioner Hardesty](#); [Edwards, Karly](#)
Subject: Funding dedicated for the Forest Park Entry Project: An alternative suggestion
Date: Tuesday, May 11, 2021 5:02:47 PM

Dear Commissioners

I would like to add testimony to an issue that will be decided at Wednesday, May 12, 2021, City Council Hearing:

Item 343: Construction of Forest Park Entry Project: to authorize a competitive solicitation and contract with the lowest responsive and responsible bidder for construction of the Forest Park Entry Project.

This project, which, I believe, over 4 million dollars has been allocated to construct a 30-car parking lot at the confluence of St. Helens Highway (highway 30) and Yeon Avenue, is an unfortunate allocation of funds. This is known as "Phase One" of the Forest Park Entry Project. Phase Two, which has not been approved and likely will not due to many negative constraints, is the building of a Visitor Center. The construction of a parking lot which **does not connect with any passable pedestrian trail in Forest Park** seems a poor allocation of hard-won tax-payer dollars.

Rather, may I suggest an alternative that is noted in the *Forest Park Natural Resources Management Plan*, which is a city ordinance #168509, and land use law, regarding the management and governance of Forest Park.

4 million dollars could go a long way to providing one of the major goals for Forest Park: **HIRING TWO FULL-TIME, PORTLAND PARKS AND RECREATION STAFF MEMBERS.** The park is in great need of such staffing, as is noted in the ordinance on Pages 93-94:

"At a minimum, Forest Park needs two full-time staff members: 1: an Arboriculturist for park management, project direction and neighborhood coordination and 2: a Park Attendant with experience in natural resource management and volunteer coordination. (Additionally) A natural resource enhancement crew of 6 to 10 people is needed seasonally to handle natural resource improvement projects. ...Without additional staff, information and equipment, it will not be possible to protect the park as in the past. New demands will require more active management to accommodate increased use and to protect natural resources.

" If current levels of staffing, funding, maintenance and management are continued, both the recreation facilities and the natural resources of Forest Park will suffer."

I truly hope you may reconsider the use of your funds, exchanging the construction of a parking lot that will not make the park accessible to users but will likely be a magnet for illegal camping, (as is already a significant problem at this very site), and allocate these dollars to a higher and greater use to serve the people of Portland-- staffing two, full-time professionals, as mandated in the ordinance, specifically for the health and protection of our city's greatest natural resource: Forest Park.

Thank you.

Warm regards,

Marcy Cottrell Houle

newmoonfarms@gmail.com

503-222-5455

Author of *"One City's Wilderness: Portland's Forest Park"*

From: [Daniel Zierath](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: Forest Park
Date: Tuesday, May 11, 2021 9:31:32 PM

All:

Firelane 1/Hwy 30 entrance.

There is a toxic PCB spill at the site that the Department of Environmental Quality is demanding the city clean up or be fined \$458K and the plan is to cap the area with pavement this summer. Please clean up the spill. It makes no sense to have a parking lot by such a steep grade as explained in the NW Examiner.

There is no plan to stabilize Firelane 1, which is one of the most important emergency access points for firefighters to have access to the park.

I think this is a mistake.

Regards.

DJZ

From: [Gosia Fonberg](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Date: Tuesday, May 11, 2021 10:14:20 PM

I live very close to Forest Park. Fire danger in the park is of great concern to me. I urge the Council to incorporate stabilization and grading of Firelane 1 to make it usable in the event of an emergency into the new parking lot/entrance plan. With the increased risk of fire in the park due to both camping fires and climate change (and an arsonist who, for the past few years, has persisted in lighting tree sap on fire on a quite regular basis, it is imperative that there be a firelane that is usable for vehicles in the case of a fire emergency.

Thank you for your consideration. Margaret Fonberg

From: [Gene Gmail](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: Forest park entry project (Fire lane one)
Date: Wednesday, May 12, 2021 5:55:05 AM

As a long-term citizen and neighbor of Forest Park I strongly support funding for construction of the Firelane One entry to the park to include stabilization and grading of the firelane.

Eugene Borkan
1804 NW. 34th Ave.

Sent from my iPad

From: [Jan Madill](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: Wildfires and Fire lane 1
Date: Wednesday, May 12, 2021 6:28:50 AM

Forest Park is one of our major treasures in Portland. Please make and carry through on a plan to upgrade and stabilize Fire Lane 1 as an emergency route.

Also please do all possible to help prevent fires in the park.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Janet Madill

From: [Bill Madill](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: I support improving Forest Park Firelane 1!
Date: Wednesday, May 12, 2021 7:17:00 AM

I understand that Portland plans for pave a parking lot at the base of Firelane 1 without any plans to improve the firelane. Fire in Forest Park could be catastrophic to surrounding neighborhoods and is an increasing concern to them as the park dries out in the summer. As a former 39 year resident of Willamette Heights, I am well aware of the danger. Firelane 1 needs significant work to be a useful access for fighting fires in Forest Park.

I strongly support allocating funds for improving Firelane 1.

Thank you.

William Madill
2717 NE 12th Avenue
Portland 97212

From: [Christine Bugas](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: Fire lane 1
Date: Wednesday, May 12, 2021 7:32:40 AM

Good morning,

I have recently received information that fire lane one is to be discussed this morning. I am a resident of a willamette Heights and live on the park. On two separate occasions in the last five years I have witnessed smoke in the air and walked to the entrance to the park lower MacLeay and hiked up and have found in one instance four burning trees and in the other instance entering at the Aspen entrance I have come upon a person lighting pitch on trees just to watch it burn.

Please reinforce Firelane 1 to allow access deep into the park. Forest Park is what distinguishes this city. It is the largest park in a city in the world of its kind. Please help fight fire in Forest Park.

Chris Bugas
1600 NW 32nd Ave

From: [Ted Kaye](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: 5/12/21 Council Agenda Item #343 Forest Park
Date: Wednesday, May 12, 2021 7:52:25 AM

As you resolve issues with the Highway 30 site remediation, please bear in mind that the purpose of Fire Lane 1 is to serve as a FIRE LANE.

Therefore, **Fire Lane 1 deserves the resources needed to maintain its width, surface, and drainage to allow it to function in the event of a fire.**

Ted Kaye
2235 NW Aspen Ave.
Portland, OR 97210
503-223-4660

From: [Rep Dexter](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: Agenda Item 343, Forest Park
Date: Wednesday, May 12, 2021 8:18:29 AM
Attachments: [Letter to Portland City Council.pdf](#)

Dear friends,

Attached, please find Rep Dexter's written testimony for today Agenda Item 343, on construction in Forest Park.

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Nicolas Salter-Martin
(he/him/his) (c) 541 380 0126
Representative Maxine Dexter, House District 33



To: Portland City Council

From: Representative Maxine Dexter (HD 33)

Date: May 12, 2021

Subject: Construction of Forest Park Entry Project

Dear City of Portland Commissioners,

I am a long-time resident of Willamette Heights, a neighborhood that embraces the NE corner of Forest Park. I live across from a trailhead and enjoy the forest every day. I, like my neighbors, treasure this proximity to nature and the peace that comes from time spent walking amongst the trees. I am also the current state representative for House District 33, serving NW Portland and NE Washington county.

This year, like years before but even more intensely, my constituents are concerned about the risk of wildfires to our forest and our community. Climate change has led to increasingly dry conditions and the known lack of stable access for firefighters to Forest Park is deeply concerning. I am writing today to ask you to please reconsider the current proposal for Firelane 1 as it meets St. Helens Road, and prioritize stable access for fire vehicles to Forest Park via this entry point. Item 343 on your agenda today - "Authorize a competitive solicitation and contract with the lowest responsive and responsible bidder for construction of the Forest Park Entry Project (Ordinance) 10 minutes requested" - suggests you are ready to start work. I question the wisdom of this plan.

The firelane is steep with significant erosion present and is currently unsuitable as an entry point for emergency vehicles. This is a significant safety risk to the park and our community. I do not

see that there has been any funding appropriated for repairs of Firelane 1 in the 5-year proposed Portland Parks and Recreation budget and the parking lot being proposed may further degrade the usability of this emergency access entryway. Please correct me if I am mistaken by forwarding the links to relevant budget allocations.

My district surrounds much of Forest Park and this is an issue many of my constituents have been working on for years. Their concerns are not being addressed with your current process or plan. Representative Greenlick, whose seat I was appointed to a year ago, helped secure \$2.5M in funding for this project. Much public engagement has been done with this funding since that time and yet we appear to have a plan that neither improves the safety of our community through Firelane stabilization nor conclusively addresses the environmental hazard at the site. The current proposal is meant to address a toxic PCB spill that is felt to be potentially leaching into the groundwater, making its way to the Willamette. Remediation of this environmental issue has been mandated by DEQ and the urgency of moving this project is likely due to the pending fine of \$458K. Simply placing a parking lot to cap the toxic spill site may not address the problem and may also lead to further degradation of Firelane 1. Additionally, the site is in part an oak savannah and the site has been identified in the 2035 Comprehensiveness Plan as a sensitive area for migrating birds. I have been unable to identify a formal environmental impact assessment for the work being proposed to contract and I would appreciate your sharing that with me and my constituents before finalizing a contract for this work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maxine Dexter', written in a cursive style.

Representative Maxine Dexter, M.D.

House District 33 (NW Portland and NE Washington County)

From: [Layton Borkan](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: Comment on Forest Park Entry Project. Item #343
Date: Wednesday, May 12, 2021 8:22:37 AM

To the City Commissioners:

I am writing to ask that stabilization and grading of Fire Lane #1 be included in the Forest Park Entry Project that will be considered by the commission today. This is a necessary provision to ensure adequate fire response in the park at the point where it intersects with an expanding residential presence.

Thank you,
Layton Borkan
1804 NW 34th Ave
97210

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Layton Borkan 1804 NW 34th Ave.
Portland, OR. 97210

Note: I am not predictable about checking e-mail. If you want to get my attention sooner rather than later, please call and leave a message:

Cell: 503-816-9951

Beach: 503-436-1936

Home: 503-226-9761

From: [Jane](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: Firelane 1 needs to be an actual, usable firelane !
Date: Wednesday, May 12, 2021 8:27:15 AM

Please include this as testimony for today's meeting.

In regards to today's discussion of changes being made to the Hwy30/ Firelane 1 entrance to Forest Park:

Especially with wildfire risk increasing, we are advocating for the city to incorporate stabilization and grading of Firelane 1 to make it usable in the event of an emergency.

We think it is a reckless and potentially life threatening mistake to not have this stabilization and grading of Firelane 1 as a part of the discussed plan. It is one of the most important emergency access points for firefighters to have access to the park.

It needs to be an actual, usable Firelane.

Thank you
Jane and Brad Chaddick
3304 NW Vaughn St

From: [Sen Steiner Hayward](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: Testimony on 343: Forest Park Entry Project
Date: Wednesday, May 12, 2021 8:57:40 AM
Attachments: [Testimony on Proposed Forest Park Project.docx](#)

Good morning,

Attached, please find testimony from Senator Steiner Hayward about Agenda Item 343, the Forest Park Entry Project.

Best,

Mira

Legislative Aide

Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward MD

(Please note: the Senator's last name is "Steiner Hayward")

Salem Phone: 503-986-1717

sen.elizabethsteinerhayward@oregonlegislature.gov

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[Register for our April 27 Town Hall](#)



OREGON STATE SENATE
DISTRICT 17

Dear City of Portland Commissioners,

I am a long-time resident of Portland, and have spent countless hours enjoying Forest Park with my friends and family. I, like so many others, treasure this proximity to nature and the peace that comes from time spent walking amongst the trees. I am also the current state senator for Senate District 17, serving NW Portland and Beaverton.

Now, more than ever, my constituents are concerned about the risk of wildfires to our forest and our community. Climate change has led to increasingly dry conditions and the known lack of stable access for firefighters to Forest Park is deeply concerning. I am writing today to ask you to please reconsider the current proposal for Firelane 1 as it meets St. Helens Road and prioritize stable access for fire vehicles to Forest Park via this entry point. Item 343 on your agenda today - "***343** Authorize a competitive solicitation and contract with the lowest responsive and responsible bidder for construction of the Forest Park Entry Project (Ordinance) 10 minutes requested" - suggests you are ready to start work. I question the wisdom of this plan.

The firelane is steep with significant erosion present and is currently unsuitable as an entry point for emergency vehicles. This is a significant safety risk to the park and our community. I do not see that there has been any funding appropriated for repairs of Firelane 1 in the 5-year proposed Portland Parks and Recreation budget and the parking lot being proposed may further degrade the usability of this emergency access entryway. Please correct me if I am mistaken by forwarding the links to relevant budget allocations.

My district surrounds much of Forest Park and this is an issue many of my constituents have been working on for years. Their concerns are not being addressed with your current process or plan. The late Representative Mitch Greenlick, who represented House District 33, helped secure \$2.5M in funding for this project. Much public engagement has been done with this funding since that time and yet we appear to have a plan that neither improves the safety of our community through firelane stabilization nor conclusively addresses the environmental hazard at the site. The current proposal is meant to address a toxic PCB spill that is felt to be potentially leaching into the groundwater, making its way to the Willamette. Remediation of this environmental issue has been mandated by DEQ and the urgency of moving this project is likely due to the pending fine of \$458K. Simply placing a parking lot to cap the toxic spill site may not address the problem and may also lead to further degradation of Firelane 1. Additionally, the site is in part an oak savannah and the site has been identified in the 2035 Comprehensiveness Plan as a sensitive area for migrating birds. I have been unable to identify a formal environmental impact assessment for the work being proposed to contract and I would appreciate your sharing that with me and my constituents before finalizing a contract for this work.

Sincerely,
Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, M.D.
Senate District 17





From: [Justin Zimmerman](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: Agenda No. 343 Forest park and Firelane 1
Date: Wednesday, May 12, 2021 9:19:22 AM

Please ensure that we maintain fire emergency access to Forest Park by upgrading the fire lanes crucial in the almost inevitable large fire in the park. **Specialty FIRE LANE 1.** I urge you to incorporate stabilization and grading to fire lane 1 with the plans to mitigate the PCB spill near HWY30 and fire lane 1.

Forest Park is the crown jewel of our beautiful city. We must preserve its accessibility and beauty to make sure that there is a Forest Park future generation. Let's remember the economic draw that the beauty of our area, including Forest Park, is for our city. It is indeed hard to imagine a thriving City Of Portland without a thriving Forest Park.

Fires are inevitable, please make sure the city is ready to deal with them.

Thank you,

Justin Zimmerman

City of Portland Resident

From: [tnanch](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: Forest Park Firelane 1
Date: Wednesday, May 12, 2021 9:21:08 AM

To the Portland City Council-

I write to raise concern for the health and safety of Forest Park and the residents that live at its edges. Climate Change has put the park at risk of a devastating Fire most recently demonstrated by the fires that took place in our state last year. Firelane 1 is currently unusable as an access point for Fire Trucks into the Park.

This council has an opportunity to anticipate the inevitable (a fire will one day break out in the park) and save the park and its nearby residents from a great disaster. I ask that you take a forward looking approach to this matter by investing in the future of the park through proper infrastructure repairs like Firelane 1.

Thanks for your service and thoughtfulness!

Travis Nanchy
1866 NW Aspen Ave
Portland, OR

From: [George Byron Wright](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: Agenda No. 343 ORDINANCE NO.
Date: Wednesday, May 12, 2021 10:33:37 AM

To: Commissioner Rubio and all Council Members

As a resident of Willamette Heights adjacent to Forest Park, I urge consideration for the city to incorporate stabilization and grading of Firelane 1 to make it usable in the event of an emergency. Now, more than ever, with fire danger approaching, we need to make sure that all emergency serviced have immediate and open access to Forest Park, which is Portland's jewel and stands as essential to our city's environmental health. If this 5,000 acre forest were to catch on fire, it would be devastating and but at risk many neighborhoods and cast a pall over our city. Please address this matter now.

Regards,
George B. Wright
Willamette Heights
Portland