

IMPACT STATEMENT

Legislation title: Accept the 2021 South Park Blocks Master Plan as a guide for future use and development of the Park (Resolution)

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Purpose of proposed legislation and background information:

In 2016, the Design Commission directed the Broadway Tower land use applicant to provide funds for a South Park Blocks Master Plan as part of their public benefit contribution. Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) used these funds to hire a consultant team, compensate staff, and fund public engagement corresponding with the park master planning process. The master planning process addressed several Central City 2035 action items and directives for the South Park Blocks (“Park”), including the development of a Tree Succession Strategy and integration of the conceptual Green Loop alignment into project planning.

The South Park Blocks Master Plan provides a high-level conceptual design and recommendations to guide future decisions about the Park. Park improvement projects will be placed on PP&R’s Capital Improvement Project list and go through more detailed engagement and design processes when funding becomes available and citywide priorities support moving forward. The Tree Succession Strategy provides a long-term guide for replacing trees when they naturally reach the end of their life span. It balances goals for improving the growing conditions and resiliency of the urban forest while maintaining historic character and form of the trees. Some park improvements may require earlier tree removal, which will be avoided or mitigated according to Title 11 requirements.

The Green Loop and Connected Cultural District concepts will require further design work and stakeholder engagement. PP&R will work with the Portland Bureau of Transportation to determine the best property management model for the Madison Street Plaza when that project moves forward for implementation.

Financial and budgetary impacts:

The final Master Plan provides a planning level cost estimate of design and construction of park enhancements. The improvements are shown as phases broken down by individual or paired blocks. The total design, permitting and construction costs of all phases for park improvements is estimated to range between \$23 to \$47 million. Design, permitting, and construction cost estimates for the South Park Blocks area portion of the Green Loop are estimated to be \$7.5 million. A small portion of initial park improvements to the park block between SW Columbia and Clay streets will be funded as part of the Broadway Tower public benefit contribution. Portions of the South Park Blocks Master Plan that expand capacity are eligible to be funded by System Development Charges collected for the Central City. Portland Parks & Recreation will pursue a variety of funding sources to

implement the recommended projects shown in the Master Plan over time. When future capital projects resulting from the South Park Blocks Master Plan are reviewed and approved by City Council, additional required maintenance and operations funding will be part of budget requests. See below for estimations on maintenance costs after improvements. These would replace current maintenance costs associated with the South Park Blocks.

South Park Blocks Master Plan

Annual Costs at Full Build Out

Capital Investment	\$23,000,000	\$47,000,000
Operations & Maintenance	\$460,000	\$940,000
Major Maintenance	\$460,000	\$940,000
Capital Replacement (100 yr life)	\$230,000	\$470,000
Annual Cost	\$1,150,000	\$2,350,000

Community impacts and community involvement:

PP&R and its consultant team conducted robust outreach to gather valuable input at visioning, concept review, and draft preferred design phases. The recommended enhancements and projects reflect what we heard from the public, neighbors, focus groups, the Community Advisory Committee, PP&R staff, and other City bureau and partner agency staff. Plan recommendations enhance the Park to be a more welcoming and inclusive collection of spaces for all.

A variety of outreach methods were designed to engage Portlanders in this project. These included:

- Project website;
- Walking tours;
- Tabling at multiple community events;
- Three online surveys corresponding with community events – visioning, concept review, and draft preferred design phases with Spanish translation and community engagement liaisons;
- Party in the Park – a community event in the park for visioning;
- Tabling at Farmers Market and corresponding community event for concept review;
- A month-long online Open House during global pandemic for draft preferred design review;

- Focus groups with youth at nearby St. Mary's Academy and PSU students with diverse lived experiences, and Native American community advisors;
- Meetings with Friends of the South Park Blocks, the Downtown Neighborhood Association, the Native American Community Advisory Council, and Parks Accessibility Advisory Committee;
- Meetings with representatives of cultural institutions and Portland State University; and
- Public briefings with the Urban Forestry, Design, and Historic Landmarks Commissions.

PP&R and its consultant team also worked with a Community Advisory Committee and a Technical Advisory Committee, and these groups provided local perspectives and professional expertise that informed the designs and guided the planning process. The Community Advisory Committee consisted of representatives of downtown residents, workers, students, neighboring cultural institutions, and active users of the South Park Blocks, including the Portland Farmers Market. They met six times, not including an optional Concept Development Workshop and a final meeting to review the Recommended Draft.

Proposed enhancements for the South Park Blocks rehabilitate and preserve appropriate historic elements of the Park and retrofit the design to be more accessible by people of all abilities. Young families, youth, University students, BIPOC community members, cultural institutions, Portland State University, the business community, and others have requested park improvements to better support events, socializing, more inclusive art and storytelling, and creating a safe and welcoming park for all. Many requested less of a car presence near the park, with additions like the Green Loop, and more frequent activations.

Members of the Downtown Neighborhood Association and some people from the historic preservation community have indicated that they oppose the addition of the Green Loop near the Park, as well as the addition of new park features. This group also opposes planting fewer trees over time, planting evergreen trees or other non-elm species, or any tree removal from the implementation of new park features. Native American community advisors support many elements of the plan, including adding more diverse species like evergreens, but do not favor the ordered rows of trees and linear promenade that are character-defining features of the park that historic compliance laws prevent us from changing.

Additional concerns from the Native American community were addressed in the Recommended Draft, including proposed replacement of the Lincoln and Roosevelt statues, as well as more inclusive historical content. The Downtown Neighborhood Association's concerns have been responded to through the elimination or minimization of proposed new features, design revisions to prioritize safety for pedestrians and cyclists, additions of tree planting locations where feasible, and additional content clarifying reasoning and impact of proposals. Additional engagement will occur at more detailed design phases to continue to address community concerns.

Representatives from the Friends of the Green Loop, the Friends of the South Park Blocks, the Portland Farmers Market, the Portland Art Museum, Portland’5, Portland State University, Portland Business Alliance, the United Church of Christ, RACC, and other community participants are anticipated to testify in support of the South Park Blocks Master Plan.

100% Renewable Goal:

The South Park Blocks Master Plan promotes decreased energy use from people driving less through reduction in space reserved for automobiles and creation of a more pleasant and welcoming public realm with active transportation connections like the Green Loop.

Budgetary Impact Worksheet

Does this action change appropriations?

- YES:** Please complete the information below.
- NO:** Skip this section

Fund	Fund Center	Commitment Item	Functional Area	Funded Program	Grant	Sponsored Program	Amount

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6/4/2021

Date