

Written Testimony - Agenda Item 455

Agenda Item	Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
1 455	Kristin Anderson	Support	I wholeheartedly support the renovation of the Keller rather than the creation of much more expensive new facilities. The Keller is already designed to be a city gathering space, and the new plan—with a pedestrianized zone that better connects the iconic fountain and multi-use purposes for the courtyard and surrounds—is both beautiful, deeply rooted in place and community ethos, sensible in it's improvements to existing infrastructure rather than reliance on the creation of vast new infrastructures, centers downtown at a time we desperately need it, and both more affordable and more environmentally sustainable than the other projects. We are a city that prides itself on our forward thinking and on our sustainability, so why build a brand new facility when we can beautifully renovate an existing one and thus tie in our architectural history to contemporary civic needs? The lower price tag of a Keller renovation also needs to be emphasized. People are feeling over-taxed as it is, and it seems sensible to move forward with a project that embraces the cost savings of renovation over new build. Many of our leading arts and entertainment cities have faced similar choices—London, New York, LA, DC—and have chosen to upgrade important and well-sited existing facilities over building from scratch. I hope that we can join their company!	No	05/24/24 8:11 AM
2 455	Michael McCulloch FAIA	Support	As an architect and urban designer in Portland since 1981 I am in full support of the revised Keller to continue to serve the region in a spectacular new configuration! This private/public project reinforces the urban plan of connecting the riverfront with PSU and revitalizing the Halprin Sequence of fountains and public spaces. Better utilizing both 2nd and 3rd Streets for support of the arts is exemplary. Renovating a traditional building is the most energy efficient proposal and will leverage the myriad of local support amenities surrounding the Keller. And, if Portland wants a bigger and newer facility it should go ahead and build it while enjoying the on-going entertainment provided by the Keller. It is not an "either- or"....but a "both -and" win-win!	No	05/24/24 8:51 AM
3 455	Thomas Ochinero	Support	I am writing to support the renovation of the existing Keller Auditorium project for the following reasons: 1. It is more sustainable and better for the environment to renovate and re-imagine community uses for the Keller Auditorium, which is part of Portland's history but also part of downtown Portland's present as it anchors the cultural district with unique surrounding infrastructure such as parking structures, restaurants and hotels already in place. 2. Portland needs this project to revitalize downtown. The proposed new community plaza is an exciting new use and a means to bring the community together in new ways. 3. Renovating loved aspects of our shared past is the most "Portlandy" approach. A recent poll shows 66% in favor of renovating, as opposed to just 10% who want the city to build something new in a different location. 4. Re-imagining and re-using the Keller is also the most cost-effective option. Again, a recent poll shows that 81% of respondents agree that with so many pressing community needs, it's not responsible to spend money building something new instead of taking care of what the city already owns.	No	05/24/24 9:12 AM

Agenda Item	Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created	
4	455	Carol Ehlen	Support	Let's improve what we already own rather than build something new at another location that costs more, will take longer, and, unlike The Keller, doesn't already have adequate nearby parking, restaurants, hotels, and a beloved fountain. Don't abandon downtown. Renovating The Keller is a smart investment to keep and bring more people downtown – right when we need it. Closing it sends the wrong message and will leave a dark hole downtown and in the cultural district. Portlanders strongly support The Keller – and prefer to renovate it. A recent poll showed 69% feel positive, and 43% have attended an event at The Keller in the past two years. 66% prefer renovating The Keller vs. just 10% who want the city to build a new auditorium someplace else. 81% agree that with so many pressing community needs, it's not responsible to spend money building something new instead of taking care of what we already own.	No	05/24/24 9:30 AM
5	455	Lawrence Taylor	Support	I support the renovation of Keller Auditorium. One of Portland's strengths is its amazing performing arts organizations, which has a long history in Portland and provides opportunities found in far larger cities such as San Francisco, Boston, and of course New York City. The ability to attend concerts by entities such as the Portland Baroque Orchestra with their extraordinary programming makes Portland stand out as an attractive community in which to live. What Portland lacks is a state-of-the-art performance venue. I support renovation of the Keller if it truly results in a first class venue. It would be unfortunate to do anything less.	No	05/24/24 9:58 AM
6	455	Suzanne and Richard Varien	Support	We strongly support this proposal to keep Keller Auditorium in downtown Portland. We live within blocks of the Keller, and we have been season subscribers to Broadway in Portland for years. We support many downtown businesses including restaurants, shopping and services, and we regularly visit the Portland Art Museum. If the Keller moves out of downtown, 400,000 people a year will be removed from the heart of the city, thus abandoning these businesses. Renovating The Keller is by far the best choice; it's a smart investment to keep and attract more people to downtown, when support for downtown businesses is most needed. Closing it sends an ominous message for the future of downtown Portland, leaving a huge hole in the existing cultural district, and leaving downtown businesses in the lurch. Please support the 21st Century Keller renovation. Thank you.	No	05/24/24 10:28 AM
7	455	Thomas L. Ray	Support	See attached 'testimony-to-city-council-5-29-24.pdf	Yes	05/24/24 4:00 PM
8	455	Edward B Kaye	Support	Don't let arguments about optimizing load-in capacity distract you from the fundamental issue at hand: do we keep our flagship venue downtown or do we move it out?	No	05/24/24 4:15 PM
9	455	Iori Werner	Support		No	05/24/24 4:39 PM

TO: Mayor Wheeler, Commissioner Rubio, Commissioner Ryan, Commissioner Gonzalez, Commissioner Mapps

RE: Item 455 - Accept updated Halprin Landscape Conservancy Keller Auditorium Renovation Design Concept report **City Council Agenda for May 29, 2024**

Written Testimony: In Favor.

May 24, 2024

In Portland, we sustainably renovate and reuse. Renovating the Keller is cleaner and greener, with a much smaller carbon footprint than new construction.

We should improve what we already own, rather than build something new, at a location that we don't own, costs more, takes longer, and, unlike The Keller, doesn't already have adequate nearby parking, restaurants, hotels, transit and a beloved world-renowned Keller Fountain.

Do not abandon downtown and its businesses. Do not remove 400,000 people a year from the heart of the city. Renovating The Keller is a smart investment to keep, and bring, more people downtown, right when we most need them – now – not in 8 or more years, maybe.

Closing Keller sends the wrong message, leaving a dark hole downtown, and in our cultural district. The Keller is a proven success story and a real place that, with exciting planned improvements inside and out, will serve Portland for many more decades to come.

Other proposed locations come with more question marks and risks, about cost, parking garages, new hotels (when we have 50% hotel vacancy already), and lack of neighborhood amenities. Adverse traffic impacts are inevitable at the PSU site.

Portlanders strongly support The Keller, and prefer to renovate it. A recent poll showed 69% feel positive, and 43% have attended an event at The Keller in the past two years. 66% prefer renovating The Keller vs. just 10% who want the city to build a new auditorium someplace else.

81% agree that with so many pressing community needs, it is not responsible to spend money building something new, instead of taking care of what we already own.

Finally, The Reimagined Keller Proposal offers you multiple construction schedule options, including a two performance seasons schedule (for Broadway shows and The Nutcracker). See page 2. The increased cost is \$19 million dollars, and the completion delay is 18 months more, over the option of an accelerated construction time of 19 months total. You can do the math for what is optimal. All 3 options are substantially less expensive than new construction. New construction will take much longer.

This was a no brainer when presented to City Council (according to contract) in September, 2023. The 8 month delay by Council has brought us no closer to assisting the core downtown businesses and cultural endeavors, who are gravely in need of assistance, and an infusion of confidence, from a city council committed to this city. It is still a no brainer. Accept this now.

Thomas L. Ray
2211 SW 1st Ave., Unit 802
Portland, Oregon 97201



PROPOSED SCHEDULE WITH PERFORMANCE SEASONS



Agenda Item	Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
455	IATSE Local 28	Oppose	<p>My name is Dana West, and I am a second generation stagehand with the IATSE Local 28. Having reviewed the Halprin group feasibility study regarding a potential remodeling of the Keller Auditorium I am quite concerned. First and foremost the primary intent of said study appears to be to raise property values in the areas surrounding the Keller, using the outside appearance thereof to accomplish this goal. The stated, #1 goal of the project is "embracing the iconic Keller fountain and Halprin sequence." Whilst city beautification is an admirable concept it must be stated in the strongest possible terms that a theatrical venue which is incapable of hosting events, be it due to the absence of a modern, functional backstage due to a lack of consultation with experts or the absence of promoters and producers due to renovation times robbing them of, as stated in this study, "the only theater in the Portland area capable of hosting Broadway performances, large operas, and ballet productions," benefits no one. A beautiful car without a engine will not get you to work on time, a majestic ocean liner that isn't seaworthy will never make it across the Atlantic, and a theater that cannot support the performing arts will not revitalize a city. The study states "the proposed design concept aims to turn the theater inside out — creating opportunities for the surrounding environment to, itself, be theatrical." No one will spend \$500 to stare at the outside of a building for three hours, let alone then spend \$200 more on a steak dinner and cocktails, and will assuredly not do it again two weeks later. It is also clear throughout this study that a lack of consultation with experts has led to many erroneous conclusions, such as the belief that there is no path from front of house to backstage at the Keller during performances. If as the study states "it is imperative that the community is meaningfully engaged in the planning, design, and implementation process," then why was the very heart of said community were excluded from this study: those that make their living in the Keller making the productions it hosts happen. We would have been able to explain how disastrous COVID-19 was for our industry, how catastrophic another shutdown would be, how impractical and unwise "condensed seasons" are, and that a temporary venue would only create an entirely new set of challenges and expenses. Research quickly demonstrated that the example of a temporary venue referenced by this study would in no way, shape or form fit the needs the shuttering of the Keller would create. An arena is not a theater, a residency means the needs of ever changing events are not a concern, and a "virtual concert" featuring avatars performing motion captured choreography to prerecorded music could not be farther from a Broadway production featuring dozens of talented live performers and hundreds of skilled support staff. The level of understanding of theatrical operation and relative focus of intent of this study is made clear by the fact that of their twenty four listed goals only two relate to the practical usability of the overall complex, which is half the number related to the fountain. Finally, the ability of the organizations involved in this study to refer to the pandemic shutdown as a "pause" dramatically illustrates the degree to which they are out of touch with the public, and unaware of the practical operations of artistic venues and the entertainment industry as a whole. In conclusion, we believe this study to be deeply flawed, and precisely as unaware of the practicalities of modern performing arts as one would expect from an investigation which invited Urban Forestry to the table, but told theatrical stage employees they were not welcome. This study, almost literally, does not see the forest for the trees.</p>	No	05/24/24 11:38 PM

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11	455	Amy Lynn Caplan	Support	Please choose to keep Keller Auditorium in it's current location and renovate in place. The auditorium should stay connected to the beautiful Keller Fountain. Portland has an amazing opportunity with rebuilding Keller to help revitalize our struggling downtown, to help current businesses stay open and to attract new businesses nearby.	No	05/25/24 12:29 AM
12	455	Leslie B Hutchinson	Support	I urge you to choose the updated Halprin version of renovation of Keller Auditorium so we can revitalize the entire Open Space Sequence and preserve Keller Fountain. This option rebuilds what we already have, takes advantage of parking, restaurants and transportation already in place. This is the best long term solution.	No	05/25/24 1:10 PM
13	455	Anonymous	Support	The Keller has always been a part of the Halprin Sequence. Moving it will disgrace Halprin's vision and ruin the impact of the sequence on the downtown landscape.what would the Keller fountain be without the auditorium across the street.	No	05/25/24 4:20 PM
14	455	Sara Neill	Support	Location of the Keller fits well. additional performance venues balance use at present location. The fountain nearby is a plus. Financial considerations make staying most feasible.	No	05/25/24 6:41 PM
15	455	Anonymous	Support	The Keller has easy access, parking and nearby restaurants, all amenities that can be enjoyed by patrons with ease of access. PSU has a terrible record for affording those amenities at Lincoln Hall, its on-campus venue where parking is available in a structure a block from Lincoln Hall's main entrance or on-street if one can find a space. As a disabled person it really makes Lincoln Hall performances unavailable to me. At the Keller one level parking is immediately adjacent and easy for disabled persons to access. The city has engaged a third party to evaluate proposals. That person has at the outset evinced a preference for a venue with multiple theaters. We need the Keller, we do not need a smaller venue. We have Lincoln Hall, the Hatfield and the Schnitzer. Why build a new one ? Utilize these existing venues and upgrade the historic Keller.	No	05/25/24 6:45 PM
16	455	Margaret Matera	Support	The Keller auditorium with the Keller fountain across the street makes a lovely place to attend a show and the renovation would make them better and more incorporated. Building a new auditorium in any location would then necessitate the removal/destruction of the current Keller which would only leave blight in downtown Portland and add more to the landfill. Portland espouses the philosophy of reducing, reusing and recycling and that should apply to the buildings along with everything else. This renovation is the best solution for the needed updates and improvements.	No	05/26/24 11:44 AM

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Agenda Item	Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
455	David Brezing, SW Portland resident and voter	Support	Support for the Keller Auditorium renovation is essential to the restoration of our beautiful city. Let's improve what we already own, rather than build something new at another location, that we don't own, that costs MORE and takes longer to construct. The Keller is a key component in the cultural heart of the city, with nearby parking, restaurants, hotels, transit and the stunning, world-renowned Keller Fountain. Portland's downtown is struggling to recover from economic and humanitarian crises on several fronts post-COVID. You, as city advocates and leaders, would be unforgivably, irresponsibly sabotaging the downtown recovery by destroying the Keller. It's importance economically and symbolically can't be overestimated. Don't abandon the downtown businesses (hotels, restaurants, etc.), and remove 400,000 people a year from the heart of the city. Destroying Keller sends the wrong message, leaving a dark hole downtown, and in the cultural district. We want your commitment to restoring the vitality of the core of downtown Portland. The Keller is a proven success story, and a real place that, with exciting, planned improvements inside and out, which will serve Portland for many more decades to come. Other proposed locations come with more question marks and risks, about cost, parking garages, a new hotel (when Portland has a 50% hotel vacancy??), and a need for nearby neighborhood amenities. The traffic impact on SW Lincoln will be ruinous. Have you looked at the street capacity there, and considered how hundreds of audience member, hotel guest and restaurant patron cars, plus theater production trucks, will interfere with the MAX Orange Line and multiple TriMet bus services concentrated here? Not to mention the impact on the thousands of people living in condo and apartment buildings in what is primarily a residential neighborhood. Streets will be clogged and it will be a constant struggle to keep vehicles from parking in unauthorized/illegal places. Surveys show Portlanders strongly support The Keller and prefer to renovate it. The PSU proposal is deleterious to the city and the neighborhood, benefitting ONLY PSU. Support for the Keller preservation and redevelopment is essential to prevent the absolute gutting of our beautiful city.	No	05/27/24 10:18 AM
455	Catherine Thompson, M.D.	Support		Yes	05/27/24 9:59 PM
455	Kimberly Howard Wade	Support with changes	I 100% support updated Halprin Landscape Conservancy Keller Auditorium AND I believe strongly that the City of Portland needs to invest in all three projects. They each serve a different and crucial function in the creative vibrancy of the City of Portland. The Portland University Keller rebuild offers a place for organizations while the Halprin Keller is being rebuilt and then it joins the Halprin Fountain sequence, creating a creative corridor in a beautiful part of the City that most people do not even know about. The Lloyd Center Keller rebuild offers much needed space for smaller arts organizations and cultural organizations for whom the Center City does no feel accessible. Trust me there is enough need for all three projects and imagine if they were all humming with art and culture and creativity how amazing this city would be. We need the trifecta to match the stunning artistry of the Portland International Airport redo. I see not only the aesthetics of the buildings themselves but also the public art that will be added with the Percent for Art program with both city and State investment.	No	05/28/24 8:05 AM

I am a big fan of education. When my children asked how many years I spent in formal education I tell them I finished 24th grade which included 3 universities and one teaching hospital. I have always admired PSU and its mission as an urban university with a great diversity of students, not just racially and ethnically but socioeconomically and in terms of student age. I think education at its best is inclusive and can be a great equalizer.

At the same time college level institutions are insular. They often are erected in areas with cheap real estate and they have a way of expanding in an impermeable fashion that makes the existing communities invisible and steam rolls over them, displacing them and the civic structures that bind them. This happens despite the lofty ideals that Universities explore within their walls.

The University of Pennsylvania has undertaken a formal and scholarly reckoning of their impact on adjacent neighborhoods at a time when, as a society, we are collectively recognizing these impacts.

In the case of PSU, the city has welcomed the University and supported it with all of the infrastructure that a city provides including roads, utilities, and emergency response services such as medical, police, and fire. PSU is wrapped around the South Park Blocks, a public park on the National Historic Registry, which PSU enjoys as its college green.

I see the ambitious glittery proposal by PSU to replace the Keller Auditorium in its own hinterland adjacent to the core of downtown as an abrogation of civic responsibility. It is out of touch with Portlanders, with the plight the city is grappling with to rebuild our true civic center. While surely not intentional, it is none-the less an ivory tower self interested and self preserving plan that lacks connection to the city that has generously hosted its campus for decades. It is at odds with and in competition with our broader collective goal to restore our city.

Please follow through with the carefully considered and collectively conceived plan to upgrade and restore a beloved time honored event space in our core downtown that needs so much tender rebuilding now.

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455	H Roger Qualman	Support	<p>Hello, I am Roger Qualman, a resident of Fountain Plaza condominiums, located next to the Keller Auditorium. I am also a long-time commercial realtor in downtown Portland. The Keller is a key reason my neighbors and I selected Fountain Plaza. We believed in the Keller as the centerpiece of our neighborhood and that it would be a permanent fixture and a hub for performing arts in our region. It's renovation along with the Keller Fountain will be catalysts for downtown renovation and provide a strong center for year-round activity in the years to come. I find compelling the comparatively lower cost and faster completion of the Halperin plan for the Keller, and the comprehensive planning and engineering that they have already completed. Property values in the district will be enhanced with the Keller plan. There is, however, no reasonable plan for reuse of the structure, and that will cause property values to suffer. In my opinion, renovation of the Keller is a key step in the restoration of Portland's wonderful downtown.</p>	No	05/28/24 10:15 AM
455	Marian deBardelaben	Support	<p>Good afternoon, My name is Marian deBardelaben. I live downtown and have lived through the resent and current mayhem up close. I voted for a council that would improve and build upon the plans of the visionaries who came before....so what happened?</p> <p>Why not show LOYALTY to an established theater that has served this state for a century? Show loyalty to the citizens who have generational traditions built around visits to the Keller Auditorium. Why not build upon established traditions. Don't be manipulated by the "throw away" trends of today. Why not build upon time tested service from the Keller for our citizens of this state as well as visitors.</p> <p>Why not show the RESILIENCE that Portland has after attacks from destructive elements . Elements which have sent many residents into panic and flight from our city. Show the resilience and confidence Portlanders have beyond the disruptors!</p> <p>REIMAGINE the Keller in the established space we have all come ro appreciate and love. Show appreciation for the businesses and the Halprin Sequence that make Portland's cultural center a destination spot. The Keller was and can continue to be a known and cherished auditorium for the next 100 years.</p> <p>Show LOYALTY and RESILIENCE to Portland and the citizens of Oregon--- REIMAGINE the Keller!</p> <p>Thank you</p>	No	05/28/24 10:44 AM

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22	455	Robin Quon	Support	As a former member of the Portland Landmarks Commission and current member of the Historic Preservation Advisory Board in Lake Oswego, I believe strongly in preservation of our architectural history and reduction of unnecessary building waste. By renovating the Keller in its location, you support not only the theatre but the spectacular fountain adjoining it and the entire neighborhood. Additionally, it increases the foot traffic in a part of the city that is otherwise moribund at night. As Portland blossomed in the Naito era, with significant investments in existing built environment, let this also be a lead program for investing further in the neighborhood, as the redevelopment projects begin to qualify for landmark status. I sincerely hope that a visionary like Bill Naito can emerge to guide us in rehabilitating our downtown to the vibrant, exciting place it was just a decade or so ago. Please do not abandon downtown.	No	05/28/24 12:24 PM
			Robin Quon			
23	455	Anonymous	Support	For over 100 years, the Keller Auditorium (previously the Civic Auditorium and Public Auditorium) has been a center of Portland's cultural landscape. Renovating and reusing the current building will preserve this legacy rather than erasing it. Heritage is not a disposable asset. I urge City Council to keep Portland's history alive by accepting the Halprin Landscape Conservancy's plan.	No	05/28/24 12:27 PM
24	455	Jacqueline Walton	Support	Don't abandon downtown and remove 400,000 people a year from the heart of the city. Renovating The Keller is a smart investment to keep and bring more people downtown – right when we need it. Closing it sends the wrong message and will leave a dark hole downtown and in the cultural district.	No	05/28/24 12:30 PM
25	455	Louisa McCleary	Support	We love our Keller Auditorium and its downtown setting!! It is already beautiful, and can be made even more so, and more functional, with a remodeling. Tearing it down would be a tragedy. It would completely abrogate Portland values to renew the treasures we have! The redesign proposed by Halprin is wonderful. There is absolutely no need to demolish this building and rebuild elsewhere. Audiences will be alienated, and attendance elsewhere will go down. People will be appalled at such a destructive mistake. We desperately need new projects to revitalize downtown. Any inconvenience to performances in the interim can be coped with, and will be promptly forgotten when the remodeled building re-opens. Don't miss this opportunity! Remodel the Keller and its surroundings!	No	05/28/24 12:33 PM
26	455	Anonymous	Support	I think it's important to keep the Keller downtown as we continue to work to revitalize the area. The interplay of Halprin's fountain and the architecture of the Keller will be preserved, providing important continuity between these two key civic spaces. Additionally, removing the Keller will leave a hole in the downtown entertainment area. Surrounding businesses will also be affected if the Keller were to move. I also strongly feel that it fits with the ethos of Oregon and Portland to sustainably renovate the building and create a piece of wonderful architecture in the downtown core. My daughter attends Oregon Ballet Theatre and loves dancing at the Keller. It's a special place that holds lots of positive memories for people living in Portland and the surrounding areas. This kind of core memory brings people down to the Keller again and again, bringing energy and excitement to the area. I strongly support the reuse of the existing Keller and I encourage the City to renovate it to take care of and improve what you already own. Thank you!	No	05/28/24 12:56 PM

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27	455	Susan Emmons Poss	Support	One very effective way to revitalize downtown areas of cities everywhere, is to renovate and pump fresh energy into an existing civic building. Especially one like the Keller. It has been a successful center of performances for a long time and it is important to the patterns and pulse of the city to rejuvenate it. Portland needs this now and the Keller needs this now. When civic buildings such as the Keller are abandoned, it does not bode well for the rest of the downtown areas in the city in which it lives. This is a great opportunity to spur both the Keller and Portland downtown into a bright future.	No	05/28/24 12:56 PM
28	455	Laurie Matthews	Support	<p>I fully support rehabilitating the current Keller Auditorium for continued use into the next century. It's a critical anchor in the city and for the associated National Register of Historic Places Open Space Sequence. Portland doesn't have a great track record for rehabilitating our iconic historic buildings so let this be an opportunity to reverse that trend to meet our sustainability and character goals.</p> <p>Let's improve what we already own rather than build something new at another location that costs more, will take longer, and, unlike The Keller, doesn't already have adequate nearby parking, restaurants, hotels, and a beloved fountain.</p> <p>Don't abandon downtown and remove 400,000 people a year from the heart of the city. Renovating The Keller is a smart investment to keep and bring more people downtown – right when we need it. Closing it sends the wrong message and will leave a dark hole downtown and in the cultural district.</p> <p>The Keller is a proven success story and a real place that, with exciting, planned improvements – inside and out – will serve Portland well for decades to come. Other proposed locations come with more question marks and risks about cost, parking garages, and nearby neighborhood amenities.</p> <p>Portlanders strongly support The Keller – and prefer to renovate it. A recent poll showed 69% feel positive, and 43% have attended an event at The Keller in the past two years. 66% prefer renovating The Keller vs. just 10% who want the city to build a new auditorium someplace else. 81% agree that with so many pressing community needs, it's not responsible to spend money building something new instead of taking care of what we already own.</p>	No	05/28/24 1:09 PM
29	455	Anonymous	Support	Renovating and reusing the existing Keller Auditorium is the most environmentally and fiscally responsible answer to updating the Keller Auditorium, and the only solution currently being considered that doesn't leave a gaping hole in our already struggling downtown. Restoring the Keller is an investment in reclaiming vitality in Portland's urban core.	No	05/28/24 1:12 PM
30	455	Terry Amundson, Koble Creative Architecture	Support	Definitely in support of the concept designs for the reuse of the existing Keller Auditorium. I hope that you will decide to care for and improve the existing resource.	No	05/28/24 1:29 PM
31	455	Cory Tyler	Support	As a season ticket holder to the Broadway shows, I strongly support keeping the Keller. It has a long history and should not be put aside for some other location.	No	05/28/24 1:29 PM
32	455	Chris Emerson	Support	I support the renovation of Keller Auditorium. Please don't leave another hole in downtown Portland by moving this public jewel. This is critical to Portland's future as we try to bring people back downtown. Thank you.	No	05/28/24 1:46 PM

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33	455	Jim Stone	Support	As a Retired Architect (to whome the Profession was quite Kind for nearly 5 decades), I urge that it is environmentally smart to Renovate/Re-use. Downtown seriously needs our re-envigorated support and investment, and with its already proven track record, the Keller deserves such. --- Jim Stone	No	05/28/24 1:49 PM
34	455	Barbara Rhyne	Support	I strongly support the reuse of the existing Keller. I encourage the City to renovate it to take care of and improve what you already own.	No	05/28/24 2:00 PM
35	455	Mary Jeanne Oliva	Support	I support sustainably renovating and reusing the Keller auditorium and site near the Keller Fountain. As a member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation I am strongly in favor of reuse, especially with the added benefits of available existing parking, and the potential for downtown revitalization.	No	05/28/24 2:08 PM

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455	Cheryl J. McDowell	Oppose	<p>As a resident of the downtown area and frequent member of the audience at arts performances, I am distressed by the proposal to rebuild the existing Keller Auditorium.</p> <p>I have viewed the Zoom meeting where the supporters of the rebuild option presented their proposal to community members. I have carefully compared this approach to the very exciting PSU proposal. It is clear to me that the PSU proposal is far superior.</p> <p>The Keller rebuild presentation was very unprofessional. While it is possible that an unprofessional presentation can lead to a well executed building process, it certainly raises doubts in my mind. I also was concerned by the highly unprofessional manner in which the rebuild proponents attacked the PSU proposal.</p> <p>I did like the ideas of frequent closures of 3rd Ave and a revitalized restaurant inside the Keller. But other than that, I really don't like the looks of the redesigned Keller. I am not a huge fan of the current Keller, so the concept of remodeling it isn't appealing to me.</p> <p>Once PSU's proposed complex is built, the city could tear down the existing Keller auditorium and build badly needed affordable housing in the heart of downtown. Small business (such as restaurants, a pharmacy, barber shop, grocery store, dry cleaners, and coffee shop) could be located on the ground floor. These small businesses would benefit the people living in the Keller housing as well as people living and working in the area.</p> <p>Most important of all, PSU's proposal would allow the current Keller Auditorium to operate while the new performing arts complex is being built. The proposal to "rebuild" the Keller would mean lost revenue for the Portland 5, lost jobs for artists, and lost revenue for struggling arts organizations. Broadway Across America has already said they would NOT come to Portland for three seasons. Would they really return after that? Could local arts organizations really survive 19 months of no performances and no revenue? Could artists stay in Portland during those 19 months of no work? I do not think so.</p> <p>The bottom line for me is that the remodel would eliminate performances for 19 months (or some portion thereof) and that is just not workable for anyone. I sincerely doubt that their proposed \$15 million of assistance to arts organizations would really materialize. I question their assertion that it is more energy efficient to remodel than build from scratch. How about the energy efficiency of running the remodeled facility vs the newly constructed one?</p> <p>I also think that their emphasis on the central district location was overstated. The PSU version is only a few blocks away and would actually extend the central/cultural district. Would the few businesses near the Keller really close? Could those businesses really survive 19 months of the Keller being closed? I don't think either location really has a neighbor around it, so that objection doesn't hold up for me.</p> <p>Lastly, I don't agree that public/private partnerships are pie in the sky (or "air" as they said). Portland has had successful public/private partnerships in the past and could certainly do so again.</p>	No	05/28/24 2:12 PM

Council Written Testimony

Agenda Item	455
Position	Oppose
Comments	<p>As a resident of the downtown area and frequent member of the audience at arts performances, I am distressed by the proposal to rebuild the existing Keller Auditorium.</p> <p>I have viewed the Zoom meeting where the supporters of the rebuild option presented their proposal to community members. I have carefully compared this approach to the very exciting PSU proposal. It is clear to me that the PSU proposal is far superior.</p> <p>The Keller rebuild presentation was very unprofessional. While it is possible that an unprofessional presentation can lead to a well executed building process, it certainly raises doubts in my mind. I also was concerned by the highly unprofessional manner in which the rebuild proponents attacked the PSU proposal.</p> <p>I did like the ideas of frequent closures of 3rd Ave and a revitalized restaurant inside the Keller. But other than that, I really don't like the looks of the redesigned Keller. I am not a huge fan of the current Keller, so the concept of remodeling it isn't appealing to me.</p> <p>Once PSU's proposed complex is built, the city could tear down the existing Keller auditorium and build badly needed affordable housing in the heart of downtown. Small business (such as restaurants, a pharmacy, barber shop, grocery store, dry cleaners, and coffee shop) could be located on the ground floor. These small businesses would benefit the people living in the Keller housing as well as people living and working in the area.</p> <p>Most important of all, PSU's proposal would allow the current Keller Auditorium to operate while the new performing arts complex is being built. The proposal to "rebuild" the Keller would mean lost revenue for the Portland 5, lost jobs for artists, and lost revenue for struggling arts organizations. Broadway Across America has already said they would NOT come to Portland for three seasons. Would they really return after that? Could</p>

local arts organizations really survive 19 months of no performances and no revenue? Could artists stay in Portland during those 19 months of no work? I do not think so.

The bottom line for me is that the remodel would eliminate performances for 19 months (or some portion thereof) and that is just not workable for anyone. I sincerely doubt that their proposed \$15 million of assistance to arts organizations would really materialize. I question their assertion that it is more energy efficient to remodel than build from scratch. How about the energy efficiency of running the remodeled facility vs the newly constructed one?

I also think that their emphasis on the central district location was overstated. The PSU version is only a few blocks away and would actually extend the central/cultural district. Would the few businesses near the Keller really close? Could those businesses really survive 19 months of the Keller being closed? I don't think either location really has a neighbor around it, so that objection doesn't hold up for me.

Lastly, I don't agree that public/private partnerships are pie in the sky (or "air" as they said). Portland has had successful public/private partnerships in the past and could certainly do so again.

Instead, I am excited about the opportunities presented in PSU's proposal. Please help move Portland forward again and vote for PSU's proposal to build an exciting performing arts complex in the heart of our city.

Name or Organization	Cheryl J. McDowell
Submitted	05/28/24 2:12 PM
Attachment	No

	Agenda Item	Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
37	455	Janelle Schneider	Support	I strongly support the reuse of the existing Keller Auditorium. I encourage the City to renovate it to take care of and improve what you already own	No	05/28/24 2:43 PM
38	455	Dustin Posner	Support	As a person who lived in Portland for over 35 years - I believe in the vibrancy of having a strong, solid downtown. Keeping the Keller at the existing site is critical to keeping downtown successful as a pedestrian focused city. Rehabilitating the Keller in the existing structure is the only proposal of the three being studied that I believe meets that vision. While I no longer live within the city limits, I do still come into Portland for cultural events, such as Portland Opera, etc. - many of which utilize the Keller Auditorium. Please vote to accept the Halprin Landscape Conservancy plan. Cordially, Dustin Posner, Architect	No	05/28/24 2:54 PM
39	455	Willie Levenson	Support	In support of renovating Keller	No	05/28/24 3:06 PM
40	455	Anita Davidson, Downtown Condominium Owner	Support	see attached memo	Yes	05/28/24 3:07 PM
41	455	Michael Limb	Support	I strongly support the reuse of the existing Keller. I encourage the City to renovate it to take care of and improve what you already own.	No	05/28/24 3:09 PM
42	455	Helen GARBER	Support	Restore the Keller to keep the entertainment in the Cultural district downtown.	No	05/28/24 3:12 PM
43	455	Anonymous	Support	Please keep the beautiful structures and update them.	No	05/28/24 3:21 PM
44	455	Anonymous	Support	I fully support the renovation of the current Keller Auditorium building. While it needs upgrades, it makes more economical sense to renovate and not destruct the building entirely. The location is also ideal, with ample parking and accessibility.	No	05/28/24 3:36 PM
45	455	Lory Johansson		I strongly support the reuse of the existing Keller. I encourage the City to renovate it to take care of and improve what you already own. Reuse and reimagination of the beautiful fountain area is the most responsible approach!	No	05/28/24 3:39 PM
46	455	Anonymous	Support	we urge you to restore what was once civic auditorium to it's original form in 1917..... .https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keller_Auditorium#/media/File:Portland_Public_Auditorium_circa_1918.jpg	No	05/28/24 3:49 PM
47	455	Michele Bowler-Failing	Support	I strongly support the reuse of the existing Keller. I encourage the City to renovate it to take care of and improve what you already own. Why create waste when what we have can be updated, especially in this era where reuse and recycling are better options to creating waste and excess.	No	05/28/24 4:29 PM

For: May 29, 2024

To: Portland City Council

For: Testimony for Agenda Items (Reports):

455 - Support Halprin Landscape Conservancy Keller Auditorium Renovation

456 - Oppose Lloyd Center Keller Auditorium Design Concept

457 - Oppose Portland State University Keller Auditorium Design Concept

Honorable Mayor Wheeler and Distinguished Commissioners,

I own a condominium in the Downtown Cultural District and believe the arts are the heart of every successful city.

For the reasons below, I ask you to [support the Halprin Landscape Conservancy's Keller renovation plan](#) which has advantages well above both the Lloyd Center and PSU sites.

1. "Downtown First" - the Keller Auditorium is at least 8 blocks closer to the downtown core, and to the City's other well-known Cultural District venues than PSU or Lloyd Center. If we truly believe a thriving downtown is key to turning this city around, then "Downtown First" needs be our priority. And a public project—not a university, private, or partnership one—can best muster citizen support.

2. Less Public Cost - according to the concept reports, the Keller can be renovated for about \$200 million, which is roughly half the City's share of building a new venue at PSU (a \$600 million-plus cost estimate less the combined \$221 million share of PSU plus the private hotel partner).

3. Less Carbon Impact - "The greenest buildings are buildings that already exist," says the American Institute of Architects and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, attached. The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency also reports that renovating existing buildings reduces carbon emissions and is better for the environment than constructing a replacement of comparable size. If our City is serious about reducing our carbon impact, start here.

4. Proven, Simplified Management - there is additional risk for the City to take on the “condominium partnership structure” proposed for the PSU site and implied at the Lloyd Center site. Such a partnership will not manage itself—it will require additional, long-term public staff to oversee contracts, budgets, expenses, and reports. Established management and logistics at the current Keller are advantages over a new, complex and untested partnership which is likely to be less transparent, and potentially less accountable and more costly to taxpayers.

5. Other Sites Can Continue Plans - PSU and the Lloyd Center were already working on long-range plans for their sites, i.e., for possible education, performance, conference center, and sports venues. Those sites can still move forward with projects that will augment the Keller renovation, not replace it.

When time to vote, please support renovation of the current Keller Auditorium.

Yours truly,

Anita Davidson
Downtown Condominium Owner, 97201

Attachment: “Building Reuse: A Proven Climate and Economic Strategy”



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Building Reuse: A Proven Climate and Economic Strategy

The greenest buildings are buildings that already exist. With nearly half of America's 125 million buildings having reached fifty years old, policies that support the preservation, retrofit, and adaptive reuse of older buildings offer an innovative and economically sound approach to reducing the nation's thirty-one percent contribution to annual emissions from building operations.¹

- Reuse and retrofit of older and historic buildings avoids the release of embodied carbon emissions—the carbon emitted by the manufacture, transport and assembly of materials—from the construction of new buildings.
- Research shows that building reuse avoids 50-75% of the embodied carbon emissions that an identical new building would generate because renovations typically reuse most of the carbon-intensive parts of the building — the foundation, structure, and building envelope.²
- Reducing embodied carbon through the preservation, reuse, and retrofitting of existing buildings helps attain emission reduction goals and offers an innovative strategy that can be replicated on a global scale.

Building Demolition Wastes Valuable Climate Assets

Thirty-four percent of buildings are demolished due to land-use concepts that have nothing to do with the physical state of the structural systems.³ Each year, approximately 1 billion square feet (about the area of Manhattan) of buildings are demolished and replaced with new construction in the United States. According to the EPA, 600 million tons of

Reduce Operational Carbon by Making Older Buildings More Energy Efficient

Retrofitting existing buildings dramatically reduces its operational carbon emissions in the future. Operational carbon is released as the result of heating, cooling, lighting, cooking, etc., within the building.

Retrofitting buildings to increase their energy efficiency has the potential to significantly reduce the amount of operational carbon released into the atmosphere. Building reuse in urban environments has the potential achieve half of carbon reduction targets.⁵

Improving the energy performance of existing buildings through rehabilitation can also be eligible for federal Historic Tax Credits. Historic rehabilitation has a thirty-eight-year track record of creating 3 million jobs and generating \$90 billion in private investment. Studies show that residential rehabilitation creates 50% more jobs than new construction.⁶

¹ The Environmental Protection Agency, "Fast Facts 1990 – 2020 National-Level U.S. Greenhouse Gas Inventory"; April 2022.

² Brockman, Clark, Lindsey Naganuma. "Combating Climate Change: A Study of Embodied Carbon." GreenBiz, November 8, 2021.

³ O'Connor, Jennifer. "Survey on Actual Service Lives for North American Buildings." October 2004.



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construction and demolition (C&D) debris were generated in the United States in 2018, with demolition waste representing more than 90 percent of the total debris. Most of that waste is hauled using trucks producing air pollution to landfills that often occupy land formerly used for farming and forestry.⁴

Rehabilitation is Now Preferred Over New Construction

It can take up to eighty years for a new energy-efficient building to overcome, through efficient operations, the climate change impacts created by its construction. While carbon measuring methods continue to evolve, the American Institute of Architect's (AIA) 2030 Commitment—program has offered the design community a way to publicly show their dedication to a carbon-neutral future since 2007. Calling on designers to achieve carbon-neutral buildings by 2030, the 2020 expansion of the program to include embodied carbon represented data growth of more than 250 million gross square feet of tracked embodied carbon the following year.⁷

In addition to supporting climate goals, rehabilitation is good business. According to the AIA Architecture Billings Index, renovations have surpassed new construction for the first time in two decades⁸ and this market trend has been underscored by American architecture schools' increasing emphasis on embodied carbon.⁹

Repurposing old buildings—particularly those that are vacant—reduces the need for construction of new buildings and the consumption of land, energy, materials, and financial resources that they require.

Support Policies that Promote Building Reuse

- Strengthen the Historic Tax Credit Incentives
 - Through the federal historic tax credit, historic rehabilitation has a more than 40-year record of accomplishment in the U.S.—creating 3 million jobs, rehabilitating 47,000 buildings, and generating \$181 billion in private investment. This progress has been particularly impactful for small, midsize and rural communities.
- Support and Reauthorize the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF)
 - The HPF needs robust funding to support survey and digitization efforts that will significantly aid in efforts to address mitigation and planning for climate-related disasters while preserving irreplaceable historical and cultural resources.

⁴ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. "Sustainable Management of Construction and Demolition Materials." March 8, 2016.

⁵ Rockwool. "Understanding the Potential of Energy Retrofits." AIA: American Institute of Architects, January 12, 2021.

⁶ "Federal Tax Incentives for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings." National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services, March 2022.

⁷ American Institute of Architects. "AIA 2030 Commitment By the Numbers: Embodied Carbon." 2022.

⁸ Richards, William. "Renovation claims 50% share of firm billings for first time." AIA: American Institute of Architects, May 8, 2022.

⁹ Bernstein, Fred A. "Architecture Schools Begin to Put Embodied Carbon Front and Center." Architectural Record, September 2022.

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Agenda Item	Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
455	LaJune Thorson, Downtown Neighborhood Association	Support	<p>I am LaJune Thorson and I serve on the Board of the Downtown Neighborhood Association. The DNA has endorsed the 21st Century Keller after considering many factors. I am going to talk about one that is important to me, welcoming everyone to the arts.</p> <p>First, I ask you to visualize the Portland Art Museum. It is a unification of two grand buildings, one of which is preserved and repurposed as is our tradition in Portland. Now I ask you to visualize the new addition to the Portland Art Museum, the new state-of-the art Rothko Pavilion. This design honors artist Mark Rothko, but it also honors Portland's history and brings us into the 21st Century.</p> <p>The large windows and lighting in the Pavilion are designed to draw the attention of curious pedestrians. A new, more diverse, audience will be developed as people see what was previously hidden behind brick walls and will now be inviting and welcoming.</p> <p>The 21st Century Keller will have the same impact. The larger-than-life lighted programmable Keller Fountain will draw passers-by to this dynamic display. Instead of being hidden, a glimpse of upcoming performances will be available to everyone. The 21st Century Keller will be turned inside out to be inviting and warm and welcoming from the outside. A new more diverse audience will be attracted to see an opera or a ballet or a musical performance or a cultural event.</p> <p>We must honor Portland's history. We must bring new people to the arts. We must bring excitement to the Cultural Center in the heart of our great city. And we must accomplish these goals sooner rather than later. Now is the time and the 21st Century Keller is the place.</p>	No	05/28/24 4:29 PM
455	Anonymous	Oppose	The seating and sound have always been poor. I go to Seattle if I want to see a good performance. Outside, Market and Clay are too busy now to be surrounding a large venue. City should have thought about that long ago.	No	05/28/24 4:34 PM
455	Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commission		Please accept this on behalf of the Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commission.	Yes	05/28/24 4:40 PM
455	Beth Young	Support	As a UC Berkeley landscape architecture student in the early 1980's the Keller Fountain was presented to us as a pivotal landscape--where people could interact with the urban space however they wanted to. It was new, fresh, and changed how urban landscapes were designed. The new Keller will honor and enhance that legacy.	No	05/28/24 5:03 PM
455	Daniel Bramske	Support	Keller Auditorium and Keller Fountain are cultural treasures--our family has been lucky enough to enjoy them and make them part of our life in Portland. So much in fact that we had our most recently family photo taken there. Please invest in the wonderful facility you already own and bring it in the 21st Century.	Yes	05/28/24 5:07 PM

Memorandum

Date: Tuesday, May 28, 2024
To: Mayor Wheeler and City of Portland Commissioners
From: MERC Commission
Subject: Keller auditorium

Dear Mayor Wheeler and Commissioners:

As members of the Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commission, we are in the unique position to not only advocate for the advancement of entertainment and the arts in the greater Portland region, we're also in the position to advocate for financially prudent practices at Metro's visitor venues.

As a part of the governance of Portland's Centers for the Arts, the City of Portland maintains ownership of P5's buildings, and the MERC and Metro manage those facilities on behalf of the city and the public. We maintain an active interest in what the Portland City Council chooses to do with the oldest of our facilities, the Keller Auditorium, and whether the city seeks to redevelop Keller at its current location or work to build a new performing arts center at another location.

Before COVID, P5 generated an inflation-adjusted \$107 million in spending in the Portland region, and \$2 million in tax revenue for local governments. Its story, however, goes beyond those numbers. P5 is the beating heart of culture in Oregon, hosting the Oregon Symphony, Portland Opera, the Oregon Ballet Theatre, Oregon Children's Theatre and, of course, Broadway Across America. Maintaining access to those events is critical in maintaining the quality of life in our region.

Just as Metro maintains 18,000 acres of open space that are, in a way, the lungs of our region, P5 operates as our region's heart.

As we watch this conversation unfold, the MERC maintains an interest in the following outcomes:

- A safe facility. When the Keller was remodeled in 1967, the idea of "plate tectonics" was about 2 years old. It would be another 20 years before scientists started to realize the seismic potential of the Cascadia Subduction Zone. No building in 1967 was built to sufficient seismic standards, because no engineer knew the scope of a potential earthquake in Portland. We must ensure that our large auditorium space is safe for visitors and employees for the next century.
- A modern facility. Everyone knows that Keller lacks the amenities that visitors expect from their cultural experiences – from things as basic as sufficient restroom space, to increased concessions and areas to gather before and after shows. A new auditorium must meet the needs of visitors as we seek to compete with other entertainment options for limited discretionary spending.



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- A welcoming facility. Access to events at the Keller has not always been welcome to all of the residents of our region. The Keller is built on Native land. In the 20th Century, the area around the Keller was “redeveloped” at the expense of Portland’s Italian and Jewish communities, who were displaced from the area and never recovered their sense of community. A new auditorium must account for those who came before the auditorium was there, and ensure equitable access to the facility for communities that have historically been excluded, or felt uncomfortable, at Keller shows.
- An economic driver. This has a lot of meanings, but key to us on the MERC are support of our regional economy, support of our workers and being welcoming of clients and shows.

If a new auditorium draws 2,000 visitors who immediately get in their cars or on MAX and go back home, without lingering in the vicinity and supporting a vibrant urban life, our mission has failed. Going to a show should not be an out-and-back experience, it should be an event.

Our workers rely on performances to make a living. Hundreds of workers had to scrape by during COVID when P5 was closed, causing significant trauma and harm as the Keller and other venues were shuttered, week after week. An extended period of lost shows and lost hours might cause us to lose the workforce we trust to deliver excellent shows at our venues.

Finally, we have to be cognizant of the needs of our clients. There’s no point operating a large auditorium if we don’t meet the needs of the performers. In the case of Broadway, which is by far the largest generator of revenue for P5’s operations, we know some of the key criteria – ensuring ongoing access to large blocks of time for high-demand shows, and increased access for the dozen-ish trucks that haul sets and equipment between cities as Broadway tours. Keller just doesn’t have the load-in, load-out space that modern theatres have, and no space in Portland is equipped to fill that need during an extended closure.

In short, this is complicated, but important work. As the stewards of P5’s cultural vision and the taxpayers’ financial investment in Portland’s work, we hope the City Council will make choices that support all of these equally important needs for the auditorium’s next century.



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Agenda Item	Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
455	Tripp Somerville	Support	<p>My daughter and I saw the White Stripes (twice!) @ the Keller. Years later I saw Sturgill Simpson tear the house down. The Keller is the reason we went to that part of downtown. It's how we discovered the Halprin fountains. And the good burrito cart around the corner.</p> <p>The Keller is essential to the vitality and street life downtown. Especially now. Reimagining it means reimagining and invigorating that entire neighborhood, and all of downtown. An empty building or another hole in the ground isn't the answer to what Portland needs now.</p> <p>Let's invest in what we have. Let the Keller bring back thousands and thousands of people to our streets and restaurants and burrito carts. Let's show Portland taxpayers we can do great things with places we already hold dear. And a place my family grew up with.</p> <p>Tripp Somerville No. Portland</p>	No	05/28/24 5:15 PM
455	James Perry	Support	<p>I support and urge council members to support the proposed Keller renovation. The site is unique in its cultural legacy as well as its linkage to Keller Foundation and to the adjacent Halprin Sequence . The site offers nearby parking in multiple garages while Portland streetcar, Max, and bus stops are short walks away. The rejuvenation of Keller Auditorium is an opportunity to invest in the future of downtown Portland, to support the arts, and to provide a performance facility built to modern codes and standards.</p>	No	05/28/24 5:16 PM

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Agenda Item	Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
455	Anne E. Draper	Support	<p>TO: Mayor Wheeler & City Council FROM: Anne E. Draper SUBJECT: Endorsement of 21st Century Keller Renovation</p> <p>I am a resident of the Hosford-Abernethy Neighborhood District (HAND). I am a long-time patron of the Keller Auditorium & Fountain, & I support the position of the Downtown Neighborhood Association endorsing the Keller renovation. I previously submitted testimony in support of the renovation proposal. Since then, I have been educating myself on the alternatives by attending presentations & reading materials prepared by the finalists. I continue to believe that the renovation of the existing Keller is superior to new-build alternatives on all major criteria & is a better use of public funds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Lowest cost: The total cost is significantly lower than any new-build alternative. It is an investment that will provide public benefits long into the future. •Earliest completion: The Keller renovation project is ready to move forward first, & it would require the least total construction time. Required building closure has been minimized & accounted for in the project budget. Creative & collaborative use of other venues during construction can mitigate the short-term disruption caused by the closure. •Environmental benefits: The renovation builds upon existing infrastructure. Demolition requirements are minimized. There is no need to construct a new parking garage. •Seismic resilience: The structure will meet or exceed all the latest seismic codes. •Downtown revitalization: The renovation meets all performance venue criteria and adds restaurant/bar amenities, a programmable plaza, & activation of the expanded venue beyond performance dates/times. <p>This exceptionally beautiful & exciting facility will stand as a lasting legacy of your tenure on the City Council. The 21st Century Keller is a central ingredient of our city's needed rebirth.</p> <p>I appreciate the work that has gone into the new-build proposals. I believe the Lloyd Center redevelopment could include performance space that expands future opportunities to meet growing demand. I would support such a proposal as an addition to existing venues, but not as a replacement for the Keller. For PSU, I hope that future development will focus on core priorities such as educational facilities and student housing.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p>	No	05/28/24 5:27 PM
455	Megan McCoy	Support	<p>I, like many Portlanders, have enjoyed many shows at the Keller with my family over the years, so I have some nostalgic ties, but more importantly, I think renovating the Keller is by far the best option: it's more environmentally conscious than building a new venue; it will help sustain supporting businesses downtown, which is not only crucial to the success of the downtown core, but has cascading affects on the urban growth boundary and our beautiful natural areas; renovation will be quicker than a rebuild thus mitigating the negative impacts closure will inevitably have on the economy of the Artistic Community in particular. Let's renovate and preserve, not discard and abandon!</p>	No	05/28/24 5:33 PM
455	Gracie Campbell	Support	<p>I strongly support the reuse of the existing Keller. I encourage the City to renovate it to take care of and improve what you already own.</p>	No	05/28/24 5:39 PM
455	Janet Schaeffer	Support	<p>I love the PSU proposal for an intermediate sized music hall in addition to the Keller-sized one....BUT the location is horrible, and downtown needs the Keller. PSU could instead support the Keller redo AND build an intermediate hall near its Lincoln performing hall by replacing a nearby parking garage.</p>	No	05/28/24 6:08 PM

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Agenda Item	Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
455	Jane Jarrett, former Executive Director, Architecture Foundation of Oregon	Support	<p>Not long ago, the Keller anchored a vibrant, active neighborhood that served not only theater goers, residents and businesses, but families, restaurants, coffee shops and a broad representation of the community. A beautiful and functional theater can be built anywhere. But a site that can anchor such a panoply of Portland, at the nexus of the legendary Halprin Sequence and connecting residential to commercial neighborhoods would be rare to find in any city. Portland must retain this site for its largest performance venue. The Council must recognize that there is more at stake here than just the theater as we figure out how to move out of our current malaise.</p> <p>I was part of the team that oversaw renovation of the Paramount to Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, and design and construction of the new theaters building across Main Street. I have been an avid supporter of Portland's performing arts organizations for decades, have enjoyed performances in most major cities in the US and Europe, and have very strong feelings about how this venue needs to work as part of downtown Portland.</p> <p>If you want to revitalize downtown Portland, do not remove one of the City's strongest magnets to the outskirts.</p> <p>I am familiar with most of the arguments against remaking the Keller. Those concerns can all be overcome. Please have the courage to make good on this opportunity.</p>	No	05/28/24 6:39 PM
455	Tuck Wilson	Support	Preserving the Keller auditorium	No	05/28/24 6:41 PM
455	Roger Vrilakas	Support	<p>It is difficult to restrain myself from berating Council over even having a discussion about whether or not to renovate the Keller, as opposed to building something new somewhere else. Please, do the right thing and renovate the Keller.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Roger Vrilakas</p>	No	05/28/24 7:03 PM
455	Anonymous	Support	I strongly support the reuse of the existing Keller. I encourage the City to renovate it to take care of and improve what we already own. Never forget: The Greenest Building Is The One That's Already Built.	No	05/28/24 7:07 PM

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Agenda Item	Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
455	B Story Swett	Support	I enthusiastically recommend that the Council support the 21st C Keller proposal by the Halprin Sequence Conservancy as the most reasonable response to address the continued need of a venue for presenting Portland's cultural, theatrical and operatic events. This proposal's environmentally-responsive reuse of a historic building will renew the original building for, now, a remarkable third time, demonstrating this city's commitment to environmental stewardship and responsibility into our future. I think it's a significant attribute that the Halprin proposal makes the most of existing resources which aligns well with our city's architectural heritage and green character. This proposal is far superior to the competing PSU new construction scheme in its preservation of energy and existing resources and it's continued contribution and with it's plaza redevelopment, a future enhancement to the city center and the Halprin fountain and sequence, signature modernist landmarks, historical and cultural assets which attracts visitors and audiences to our city. Existing building rehabilitation when compared to new construction (when they are similarly effective in meeting a project's programmatic and performance requirements) is commonly much-more efficient in terms of construction cost and schedule in a theatrical market where events revenues are paramount. In addition, producers, promoters and performers, as well as audiences, demand responsiveness, predictable access and continuity from their performance venues. Given the recent chaotic events at PSU, its now apparent that such assurances by campus official can only be discounted. The project approach by 21st Century Keller advocates seeks to extend the life of the theater building for a remarkable third generation through reinvestment. By salvaging and reusing existing construction energy (building material production and transportation) material resources (precious material resources like stone, wood and petrochemically-derived products) already expended for the existing building are not lost, making the most by consuming the least new resources. Upgrading building systems and augmentation with solar-sourced energy systems will position 21st Century Keller for active use for future generations of Portlanders. This approach reduces negative effect on our earth's environmental quality by reducing the burden to climate change in multiple ways throughout that renewed life-cycle. By investing in a third reuse of the building, the 21st C Keller offers the city an incredible historic backstory and today makes the building even-more relevant by improving the image of the city of Portland (where in recent years, we all have suffered so greatly). It offers proof of Portlander's willingness to make prudent investments in their city now and into the 21st Century. Don't squander the opportunity to be a part of that story. B Story Swett, City Center Resident and Architect	No	05/28/24 7:22 PM
455	Bryan Edgington	Support	I strongly support the reuse of the existing Keller. I encourage the City to renovate it to take care of and improve what you already own.	No	05/28/24 7:40 PM
455	James S Heuer	Support	I strongly support maintaining and upgrading the existing Keller Auditorium. Not only is it the long range least expensive option, but it keeps a major performance venue near downtown at a time when downtown needs all the help it can get. Also, the ensemble of the Halprin Fountain and the Keller makes for a jewel that neither by itself would compose.	No	05/28/24 7:42 PM
455	Anonymous	Support with changes	My support is contingent on handicap accessible environment and building.	No	05/28/24 7:54 PM

	Agenda Item	Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
67	455	Daniel Bergsvik, member Portland Art Museum Board of Trustees.	Support	Please do not gut downtown Portland by abandoning Keller Auditorium and the Halprin sequence of fountains and gardens. The Art Museum is doing its part to help reinvigorate downtown Portland. Moving this space to PSU or the Lloyd District would do immeasurable harm to attempts to save our Downtown. We were once a model for other cities trying to reactivate downtown; don't go the other direction and remove features that bring people here.	No	05/28/24 8:12 PM
68	455	Anonymous	Support with changes	The Keller Auditorium is obsolete. I wouldn't be surprised if Halpren felt stymied by having to contend with it in 1966. The fountain is a treasure but certainly there are other options than "restoration" of an 100 year old dangerous building across the street that has no architectural significance in its own right. What about it being a park extending one more block, if not some other civic use?	No	05/28/24 9:03 PM
69	455	Marianne King	Support	I support renovating the Keller because it is a venue that works: access for disabled is seamless; parking plentiful, safe and available; nearby variety of restaurants well established. PSU HAS Lincoln Hall which is difficult for disabled access and parking is not safe. Lloyd Center is a total unknown. Preserve and upgrade what works. The Hatfield and Schnitzer provide varying size venues and will be hurt if PSU builds competitors or if a new venue is built at Lloyd Center. Do not fix what is not broken! Do not further cut the tax base of our downtown, which will happen to the surrounds of the Keller if it is decommissioned. Fix and upgrade!	No	05/28/24 9:18 PM
70	455	Stephanie Whitlock	Support	<p>There are many smart and sound—but also exciting and invigorating—reasons why the existing Keller auditorium should remain downtown and be transformed into a contemporary performing arts center, as proposed by the Halprin Landscape Conservancy. Among the most compelling are:</p> <p>-A newly designed, upgraded venue will be a major driver of downtown Portland's much-needed revitalization and growth and it will demonstrate a commitment to the future success of the city center. The Keller Auditorium contributed to the renewal of the city's downtown over sixty years ago and it can again spark downtown's success. A world-class performing arts venue will attract people from across the state, country, and world to this cultural and architectural district in Portland. Walking away from the opportunity to keep the performing arts venue downtown sends the wrong message that the urban core is being abandoned.</p> <p>-Reusing and renovating an existing building is less expensive and more sustainable than building a new facility. Plus, the current location is the only one under consideration that already has ample nearby parking, restaurants, hotels, and other amenities.</p> <p>-From early on, the Keller Auditorium and Keller Fountain were envisioned to be in close dialogue with one another. The design for a new Keller only strengthens this cultural and architectural relationship. Included in the proposed renovation is a pedestrian-only exterior plaza that will physically connect the auditorium and the fountain and create a new programmable space. If the success of events like the Portland Winter Light Festival or Pioneer Courthouse Square concerts are any indication, a regularly and creatively activated plaza is an impetus for the public to spend time, and money, downtown.</p> <p>I encourage the City to choose renovation and take care of and improve this building--and its city center.</p>	No	05/28/24 9:48 PM
71	455	Patricia Atkins	Support	We should support our downtown, rather than moving a present anchor auditorium	No	05/28/24 9:59 PM

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Agenda Item	Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
455	Linda Jackson	Support	<p>I strongly support the reuse of the existing Keller. As a new resident and transplanted city planner (retired) I was impressed to see the cultural heart that Portland created at the Keller Fountain/Keller Auditorium/Schnitzer Auditorium/PAM/Downtown Library/Park Blocks, Oregon History Museum, and others. This epicenter of culture is a rare gift of people who made wise decisions in the past. The Keller is a stunning building reflective of Portland in its design and in the experience of patrons. It deserves to be honored with your support for the renovation of the Keller Auditorium.</p> <p>The concerns expressed about performances during the time of construction are neither unique nor substantive. They can be resolved with the City's creative energy and initiative. Keep your eyes on the prize: Portland will have a beautiful rehabilitated Keller auditorium for the next generation and beyond.</p> <p>While the other proposals have worthy components that may be pursued on their own merits, it is the Keller that offers the most to the City of Portland in terms of community, culture, design and a sense of place.</p> <p>I encourage the City to take care of the Keller and improve what we already own. Thank you for your service.</p>	No	05/28/24 10:49 PM
455	Roy Abramowitz		<p>We heartily support the Halprin Landscape proposal to renovate the existing Keller Auditorium space. It leaves a 100+year jewel of downtown Portland in its existing space including all of the supportive economic infrastructure that has grown up surrounding the auditorium over decades (hotels, restaurants, residences, parking, etc.). The Halprin-Keller proposal takes into account very creatively the use of its existing space including the world-renowned Halprin fountain directly across 3rd Avenue. It is also the least costly of the three proposals presented. None of the alternative proposals have addressed a key question: what happens to the Keller Auditorium space if another proposal were to be accepted? What the city doesn't need is another empty dead zone in the heart of downtown. Please don't accept the alternative "shiny object" proposals without fully understanding or appreciating the intrinsic value the Halprin-Keller proposal brings and what a tragic loss to the inner downtown community its disappearance would mean. Thank you, Roy and Kay Abramowitz</p>	No	05/28/24 11:29 PM

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Agenda Item	Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
455	J.Van Wess	Support	<p>I am writing about your upcoming decision regarding the performance arts venue of the future for the City of Portland. I am prefacing this by letting you know I am a theatre professional. I am an educator, director, producer, technician, performer and regular attendee of performing arts here in Portland, and New York City as well.</p> <p>I feel strongly that renovation of the Keller Auditorium is the right choice for the future of arts performance in Portland. Not only have the committees advocating for the 21st Century Keller done their homework, in terms of clinical assessment and innovation, but their plans are all about Portland. The development of the area in front of the Keller, the sound improvements, ADA improvements, and floor plans invite the community to be an actively engaged citizen of the arts.</p> <p>While the Lloyd Center proposal is flashy, it seems they are mostly interested in MONEY, and not very concerned with art, arts, or community. Portland State University has a fabulous proposal. It's interesting to note how they didn't really have a plan, until the 21st Century Keller people put forth theirs, and then PSU sort of copy and pasted, but in a new location. Also, PSU hasn't done such a hot job in maintaining or promoting their own performing arts or their hotel. Jordan Schnitzer's money is, I'm sure, a huge boon, but it has nothing to do with performing arts or that associated community.</p> <p>The fear of losing income because the big Broadway shows won't be able to tour in the Keller for almost two years, is, to me, a weak argument. Portland 5 has several venues which could easily house some of the smaller touring plays. As I said, I frequently see shows in New York, and just off the top of my head: CLUE, COMPANY, PARADE, SIX and even TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD could easily move into the Winningstad....and maybe even run for a few more shows in the run to get the same audience populations.</p> <p>The debate over the closing of the Keller for renovation doesn't address what is to happen to the Keller, once one of the other two venues is built. Is this iconic and historically significant architectural fixture of downtown, part of the Keller Fountain and Portland Open Space Sequence supposed to just be razed and turned into yet another boring building with uninhabited retail on the ground floor?</p> <p>I urge you to consider the why and the wherefore of the other two proposals and make your vote for the 21st Century Keller.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration.</p>	No	05/28/24 11:29 PM
455	Ramona Svendgard	Support with changes	Closing the Keller will leave a void in downtown. I support earthquake bracing for the Keller but we don't need to overspend. We need to put our city's resources to solving our houseless problem.	No	05/29/24 12:04 AM
455	Anonymous	Support		No	05/29/24 3:31 AM

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	Agenda Item	Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
77	455	Robin Cornuelle	Support	I very, very strongly support the reuse of the existing Keller. I encourage the City to renovate it to take care of and improve what you already own. Portlanders strongly support The Keller – and prefer to renovate it. A recent poll showed 69% feel positive, and 43% have attended an event at The Keller in the past two years. 66% prefer renovating The Keller vs. just 10% who want the city to build a new auditorium someplace else. 81% agree that with so many pressing community needs, it's not responsible to spend money building something new instead of taking care of what we already own.	No	05/29/24 7:08 AM
78	455	Kristina DiTullo	Support	I want Portland to improve what we already own rather than build something new at another location that costs more, will take longer, and, unlike The Keller, doesn't already have adequate nearby parking, restaurants, hotels, and a beloved fountain. Please renovate this important venue.	No	05/29/24 7:59 AM
79	455	Anonymous	Support	I support the Halprin Landscape Conservancy Keller Auditorium renovation design concept. As a resident of Downtown Portland, I definitely feel that the Keller needs to be kept as part of downtown Portland, where it will continue to bring people to the downtown core. The current location is perfect for a newly renovated Keller, with the fountain, hotels, restaurants, and parking already located there. This option will also be less costly than the other proposals. I'm sure something can be worked out for where some shows go during the 19 month construction.	No	05/29/24 8:00 AM
80	455	Michael DiTullo	Support	The Keller is one of my favorite venues in the city. Its location makes it easy for many of us in the South East neighborhoods to get to and it attracts world class performances. As a creative professional who has called Portland home on and off since 2003 I feel like the Keller is an important part of our city and having attended several presentations about the proposed renovations I'm really excited about them. Architecturally I find it stunning and I feel like they really thought through the experience to connect the inside to the outside and make everyone the passes by feel a part of it. I'm looking forward to how this proposed renovation will lift up the entire neighborhood!	No	05/29/24 8:20 AM
81	455	Deborah and Joseph Hickey-Tiernan	Support	To the City Council. The Halprin Landscape Conservancy Keller proposal is essential to the social, cultural, environmental, and economic health of South Downtown Portland. The Keller Auditorium is an intergral piece of the existing cultural district as well as part of the award winning and historic Halprin Conservancy. Portland should follow the example of other large US and European cities that keep and renovate cultural buildings just as is happening at the Portland Art Museum. Our beautiful city has struggled the last few years. But the spirit of renewal is contagious. Renovating the Keller, the existing building connected to the wonderful Keller Fountain, joins that spirit and helps it spread. We urge you to select this option. Respectfully, Deborah and Joseph Hickey-Tiernan	No	05/29/24 9:15 AM
82	455	Rachel Browning	Support	Invest in downtown. Reuse our existing assets. Please save the Keller Auditorium.	No	05/29/24 9:29 AM

	Agenda Item	Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
83	455	Alejandro Vilches	Support	I'll never forget the first time I visited Keller auditorium. It was in the Fall of 2010, I was a student, and I went to see a production of Pagliacci. Thankfully, I was able to get tickets at the last moment at the box office thanks to a student discount. The memories are still palpable: Keller, nestled in this SW corner of the city, under a romantic light as the evening fell, the color of the trees, the chilled dry air of the Fall... The excitement and bustle of the crowd as everyone rushed to find their seat, the anticipation, the awe-inspiring view from the balcony, the unique experience shared by a packed Keller auditorium as we all listened to Canio share his tragic story in a passionate tenor in Italian... This was the first of many experiences at Keller, from operas to concerts. At a time when Portland is desperately looking to revitalize its downtown, revitalizing this landmark cultural venue is essential to keeping and attracting people to the city, to give people this cultural outlet, from young students, to young professionals, to long-term residents who have made this area home. After everything Portland has lost during and after the pandemic, let us keep this essential cultural venue.	No	05/29/24 9:31 AM
84	455	Chad Dawson	Support	I strongly support this project and urge our city council to move forward with it. Thank you!	No	05/29/24 9:55 AM
85	455	Stephanie Davis	Support	I strongly support reuse of the existing Keller. I believe the best use of the City's resources would be to keep the Keller where it is and make improvements and renovations.	No	05/29/24 10:41 AM
86	455	M Burger	Support		No	05/29/24 12:02 PM
87	455	Mariah Rocker	Support	Now's the time for sustainable renovation and reuse. Instead of constructing a new building elsewhere, which would be more expensive and time-consuming, let's enhance what we already have. The Keller offers adequate nearby parking, restaurants, hotels, and a cherished fountain—amenities a new location would lack.	No	05/29/24 12:05 PM
88	455	katelyn kearney	Support		No	05/29/24 12:05 PM
89	455	Joel Thorson	Support	Supplements online testimony	Yes	05/29/24 12:07 PM
90	455	Valerie Harris	Support		No	05/29/24 12:36 PM
91	455	Diana Stuart - Downtown Neighborhood Association	Support	I have already signed up to testify in person. I am submitting written testimony for the record.	Yes	05/29/24 12:41 PM
92	455	Amy Rapp	Support	I strongly support the reuse of the existing Keller. I encourage the City to renovate it to take care of and improve what you already own. It is also more kind to our planet which Portlanders always appreciate.	No	05/29/24 1:20 PM
93	455	Broadway Across America		Please see attached fact sheet about Broadway in Portland	Yes	05/29/24 1:25 PM
94	455	Anonymous	Support		No	05/29/24 1:52 PM
95	455	Reese Vaccarezza	Support	I strongly support the reuse of the existing Keller. I encourage the City to renovate it to take care of and improve what it already owns! Renovating The Keller is a smart investment to keep and bring more people downtown – right when we need it. Closing it sends the wrong message and will leave a dark hole downtown and in the cultural district.	No	05/29/24 4:02 PM

DATE: May 29, 2024

TO: Portland City Council

FROM: Joel Thorson

RE: Council Agenda Item #455 ("Accept updated Halprin Landscape Conservancy Keller Auditorium Renovation Design Concept report")

I'm here to petition the Council to select the Conservancy's **21st Century Keller** plan for refurbishing the auditorium in its historical location, directly paired with its celebrated namesake fountain.

I'd like to argue my point without denigrating either of the alternative proposals. The decision space is complex, however, and filled with hidden dangers and pitfalls.

So, rather than stewing over a matrix of pros and cons, I'd suggest starting with a focus on *outcomes* and reasoning backwards, sidestepping the pitfalls, thereby avoiding the consequences of *wrong* decisions. The result should be a reduction of complexity, and a clearer view of the way forward to a *right* decision.

I'm begging the question, of course: how to distinguish a *right* decision from a *wrong* one? So: I'm obliged to declare my first principles. In my view, the single imperative guiding the Council's decision should be:

The authority governing the use of public performance-arts funding is a *public asset* which must remain under the city's *public control*, passed along by each Council to the next as an enduring public trust, uncompromised and undiluted by financial exigency or short-term expedience.

The ultimate train wreck, in my view, would be to outsource Portland's authority over its arts program into private, for-profit hands. Acceptance of private investment funds, public-private revenue sharing, or dilution of the power to curate programming all come with a permanent public cost, and must be avoided.

Regarding the Lloyd proposal: More information about the finance and business model of this plan must surely be forthcoming, but at present, I can't see how any investor group would find it appealing, in light of the central precept stated above. It's not my place to advise the proponents about their funding model or business plan, but it *is* the Council's job to ensure that the city resist trading away a precious public asset for short-term expedience.

Where's the profit, if not at the expense of public tax concessions, or an equity interest, or a revenue-sharing deal? In the Lloyd scenario, the most public-minded of equity partners might end up being devoured by a monopoly (think LiveNation / Ticketmaster), an unthinkable outcome in my opinion.

Regarding the PSU proposal: PSU is extending a good-faith offer of a Keller rebuilding site costing Portland a long-term lease for a mere \$1 / year. While this seems generous at face value, every lease has an expiration date and, even at 99 years (as witness Hong Kong or the Panama Canal), eventually the lease expires and the bill comes due.

If anything, my sympathies tend to favor whatever is good for "my" school. As a former PSU grad student and a frequent patron of Dean Bynum's outstanding performing-arts programming, I would love to see PSU make the leap into a higher orbit as a pre-eminent training ground for performance talent. I applaud the PSU proposal to build a much-needed mid-capacity performance venue on the Lincoln Street site.

An upgraded hotel would be very welcome too, especially if it offers lodging at an affordable price for visiting student families. Another possibility, maybe even more urgent: building subsidized low-income housing for underprivileged PSU students and staff. Note that **all three of these goals directly fulfill the central requirement** for capital support from Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission: the **education of students**.

There are other glaring problems with the PSU offer. Building a replacement venue from scratch on the PSU site saddles Portland's budget with a substantially higher cost of development, while obliging the city to buy into construction of underground parking as well – a solution for a problem that doesn't currently exist. There are numerous public parking facilities within short walking distance of the current Keller site, and they have been serving the needs of the existing program for many years.

Even more troubling is the predictable conflict between the scheduling demands of two different performance venues – a Keller replacement and the proposed mid-capacity venue proposed by PSU -- forced to co-exist virtually side-by-side. Consider the traffic, transit and parking congestion that would ensue if the two institutions were to schedule major events on the same date. Such a collision could obviously not be allowed to occur.

The only solutions I can see would be either to (1) set up some overarching calendar-sharing entity to arbitrate calendar conflicts, or (2) contractually partition the calendar into two timeshares. And wouldn't either solution amount to surrendering a crucial component of Portland's operating control over its own calendar?

Time is money, especially where event venues are concerned. It's useful to regard the Keller's as a scarce and therefore valuable asset – call it **“calendar real estate.”** Viewing it this way is useful because the Keller calendar asset delivers a perpetual stream of benefits, cultural and economic, not only for arts organizations large and small, but for their diverse audiences, not to mention countless downtown businesses.

The forfeiture or compromise of the Keller's “calendar real estate” asset, in whole or in part, would be too high a price to pay for a long-term lease on a rebuilding site – especially given that Portland already owns the ground under the current Keller.

Abandoned, the current Keller building would still need a costly seismic upgrade if it is ever to find a new public use. The likelier outcome would be demolition (which is costly too), opening the way for private exploitation. Given its location, it would be a prized acquisition for just what we need: yet another office, hotel or condo tower.

In summary, the 21st Century Keller, paired with its namesake fountain and refurbished as envisioned by a world-class design team, will be a priceless public asset for decades.

Pick your metaphor, find a way, but please don't destroy the linchpin, the center tentpole, the driving wheel, the goose that lays the golden egg. A visionary Keller reinvention on its current site, facing and embracing its celebrated fountain and park, is too great an opportunity to be missed.

Sincerely,
Joel Thorson
255 SW Harrison St., #26D
Portland, OR 97201
971-409-5408
thorson@easystreet.net

TO: Mayor Wheeler, Commissioner Rubio, Commissioner Ryan,
Commissioner Gonzalez, Commissioner Mapps

RE: Item 455 - Accept updated Halprin Landscape Conservancy Keller
Auditorium Renovation Design Concept

Written Testimony: In Favor. May 24, 2024

Good afternoon, Mayor and Commissioners,

My name is Diana Stuart. I live in the RiverPlace community in downtown Portland. I am on the Board of the Downtown Neighborhood Association which has endorsed the Keller on behalf of it's 500 + members who live, study, work and run businesses in the core Downtown.

Given the endorsement of five homeowner associations in the Keller neighborhood, that makes thousands of downtown Portlanders who have joined to urge you to select the 21st Century Keller design as the most timely, economical, ecological, iconic symbol that Portland is turning the corner is our revitalization saga. It honors the Keller Fountain and Halprin Sequence in a more inclusive, year-round, community activation welcoming 40,000 annual visitors to the core downtown, and protects existing restaurant, and businesses who have remained loyal to downtown Portland.

Selecting the Keller project still allows PSU to create the 1200 seat proposed creative arts auditorium as part of it's the preeminent educational role in Portland. It allows the Lloyd Center project to develop into a thriving NE Portland neighborhood through its master plan.

On the other hand - walking away from the Keller project forsakes the fountains, neighboring businesses and neighborhood and will leave a black hole downtown. That is not the message you should be projecting to the city, the region, the country and the world.

Please select the Keller Project as your obvious choice.

Diana Stuart, downtown Portland resident



Partners with the Portland Community since 1995

BROADWAY IN PORTLAND. Through a partnership between Portland Opera and Broadway Across America, the Keller Auditorium has been the home of Broadway shows since 1995. Broadway in Portland works with show producers and booking agents to bring first-class touring shows to Portland, including the premieres of *Wicked*, Disney's *The Lion King*, and *Hamilton*, as well as iconic classics such as *Les Misérables* and *The Phantom of the Opera*.

SEASON SCHEDULES & TOURS. Shows require firm dates and guaranteed booking commitments. The booking process typically starts 2-3 years before a show opens. For longer-running shows, like *Wicked* or *Hamilton*, it starts 4-5 years out. The shows require firm booking commitments and detailed planning years in advance, as productions visit more than 200 cities across North America.

As the presenter, Broadway in Portland is responsible for:

- Securing the routing and programming of Broadway touring shows.
- Negotiating and contracting with show producers.
- Providing financial payments to both the show and the venue by underwriting all costs for show engagement expenditures, including show guarantees, venue expenses, advertising, labor, and any potential engagement losses.
- Overseeing production logistics for the show and cast/crew needs.
- Marketing and promotion of shows.
- Managing press relations and community engagements for cast and crew.
- Ticket sales and inventory management.
- Hiring and managing local stage, wardrobe, hair, and other load-in and load-out crew to support all performances.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP. The long-term relationship with Metro government supports other non-profit arts organizations and resident companies by paying commercial rental rates and other fees, which allows Portland 5 (P5) to subsidize costs for other arts programming at P5 venues. Broadway in Portland at the Keller supports:

- More than 100 days of shows with 7 to 9 Broadway productions each season.
- More than 4.7 million attendees since 1995.

- Approximately \$2.1 million in revenue for the Keller Auditorium, representing 58% of the total \$3.8 million FY 23 Keller budget. [*Portland5 FY 2023 Budget*]
- One of the largest one-week subscription bases in the country, with over 19,000 Portland Season Tickets sold for 24-25 Season.
- More than 200,000 visitors annually to Portland; over 50% from outside the city.
- Over 800 local jobs each season, with IATSE labor backstage, independent musicians from AFM 99, and other union contractors.
- Contributes over \$30 million in revenue to local businesses annually. [*Broadway League Economic Impact Study 2016-2017*]

COMMUNITY IMPACT. Broadway in Portland works with local organizations to remove barriers to access and engage students interested in back and front-stage theater careers.

- Master Class: Led a master class at McDaniel High School with theater students, including workshops with the actors and Q&A with a crew member and students interested in the backstage career path.
- Student Groups: Works with schools and Broadway tours to provide a rounded panel for chats that includes cast and crew members, giving more complete access to the world of touring Broadway.
- New Avenues for Youth: Ongoing engagement with the SMYRQ (Sexual & Gender Minority Youth Resource Center) program to support youth attendance at shows at no cost. Past productions have included *Moulin Rouge! The Musical*, *Dear Evan Hansen*, Disney's *Frozen*, Disney's *Aladdin*, and *Cabaret*.
- Northwest Down's Syndrome Association: Provided tickets for each show of *Aladdin* and *Frozen* for families, most of whom could not otherwise attend.

BROADWAY ACROSS AMERICA. Broadway Across America (BAA) is the leading presenter of Broadway performances. BAA works with show producers and booking agents to route multiple tours to over 40 North American markets.

Agenda Item	Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created	
96	455	Barbara Kelso	Support	Don't abandon downtown. Now, more than ever, Portland needs the support of the arts to keep people living and revitalizing downtown. Without it, it sends the wrong message locally and nationally that we've given up on our city.	No	05/29/24 4:03 PM
			The Keller is a success story so why let that end and waste precious money on unnecessary new construction of a separate venue? Use those funds on the construction that will bring people back downtown and create affordable housing. Portlanders strongly support The Keller – and prefer to renovate it. A recent poll showed 69% feel positive, and 43% have attended an event at The Keller in the past two years. 66% prefer renovating The Keller vs. just 10% who want the city to build a new auditorium someplace else. 81% agree that with so many pressing community needs, it's not responsible to spend money building something new instead of taking care of what we already own.			
97	455	Anonymous	Support		No	05/29/24 4:45 PM
98	455	Karen Auburn (I have a long history with Restore Oregon)	Support	It is important to update and restore important buildings in Oregon such as the Keller. It does saves our history and helps preserve our environment. The Keller is special to me for many performances dear to me. I want to save the Keller. The plans with the Halprin Landscape are beautiful. I live close.	No	05/29/24 4:55 PM
99	455	Jane A Morrison	Support	Downtown needs assets in all parts of downtown to be its best, including an attraction like the Keller in the South Auditorium District. Or do you want the sidewalks to roll up at 5 pm?	No	05/29/24 4:58 PM
100	455	Anonymous	Oppose	Does the renovation costs factor in the removal of the asbestos that is riddled in the current Keller Auditorium that people currently work in? All of the asbestos should be removed and not just some of it. I don't think the renovation is addressing this safety concern?	No	05/29/24 5:49 PM
101	455	Mont Chris Hubbard, Musicians Union Local 99		My name is Mont Chris Hubbard. I am the Secretary Treasurer of my union, American Federation of Musicians Local 99. My union's members work in the Keller, onstage and in the pit. Like many others today, I'm not speaking today in favor of one of the plans, but rather AGAINST any plan that requires a full or partial shutdown of the work that makes up the core of our livelihood. The Opera, Ballet, and Touring Broadway productions in the Keller employ musicians, actors, dancers, stagehands, makeup artists, carpenters—those jobs are "anchor" jobs for our city's incredible community of artistic professionals. Those jobs, while many of them are part-time, are good-paying, union jobs, and hundreds, if not thousands of these artistic professionals depend on those jobs to provide the foundation around which they can build a full-time career in the arts. If those anchor jobs disappear for two, three, four years? There will be severe ripple effects in our ecosystem of creative professionals; some of them will be forced to leave for a city that can support them. And when that happens, Portland doesn't just lose a musician from one performing group; that musician works for dozens of different organizations in one year; they all lose a worker. That musician might also teach ten or fifteen hours a week in an elementary or high school or college—when that musician leaves, all of those students lose a teacher.	No	05/29/24 6:13 PM
			Any plan for replacing or rebuilding the Keller that does not figure out how to maintain the current level of employment for our artistic professionals will do major damage to our region's creative ecosystem.			

	Agenda Item	Name or Organization	Position	Comments	Attachment	Created
102	455	Lorilee Makinen	Support	Lloyd Center is not ready for an upgrade of this type. More needs to be done to make the neighborhood safe and attractive for cultural event-goers. PSU option has too high an impact on local residential, MAX, and public safety (Fire Station #4 uses Lincoln as a main access/egress route for ER call-outs) and has limited access via one-way streets and MAX tracks.	No	05/29/24 6:16 PM
103	455	Jeffrey A. Carlson	Support	Current Keller location has sufficient infrastructure (multi-lane streets, parking, hotels, etc.) for today's concert goers and for the future. No need to build an extra downtown hotel on Lincoln Street when current occupancy rates are already so low. Lincoln street is unmodifiable and insufficient to handle traffic when 3000 parking spaces are filling up or being emptied. Lloyd Center area requires continued investment before it can represent Portland's premier arts location.	No	05/29/24 6:24 PM
104	455	Susan and Ted Schneider	Support		Yes	05/29/24 6:44 PM

May 29, 2024 Portland City Council Meeting
Agenda Item: 455. New Concert/Cultural Venue for Portland

Mayor Wheeler and Members of the City Council:

You are the last Portland City Council for the foreseeable future to be charged with making decisions for the future of this city based on what is best for the city as a whole. You each represent all of us. Please make it count. What you do on this issue will shape the city for good or ill for the next fifty years.

For the last fifty years we have lived off a comprehensive vision for the City of Portland crafted in the 60's, implemented by strategic public investments that spurred private investment. Look at what was accomplished with MAX, the Streetcar, Pioneer Square and so much more. It made Portland the city we all love and brought national recognition. The underlying assumptions about where people will work and shop has changed with the technology now available. But the principle of making strategic public investments to prompt private investment in a way that serves the common good has not.

If the emerging assumptions that people will continue to work from home at least part of the time, that people will continue to do a significant part of their shopping on line, and that people want to be together to live, to enjoy art and music and dance, to enjoy wonderful food, then that has implications for the Portland of the future and especially its downtown area. It certainly means our cultural institutions needs to be first rate. How do you want to shape your decision? There are three development options before you. Lloyd Center, PSU and the current Keller sites have all be put forward.

First, there is a massive and credible privately managed planning effort underway for the Lloyd Center properties. It is very early days in that process. It is premature and risky to add a major cultural hub to that effort. Which, by the way, has a very long time line. Early indications are that they will need help with reconfiguring public services for this very large redevelopment project. But those services are most likely to be streets, water and sewer. They don't need a publicly funded concert hall to make this project work and it would create a massive hole in the downtown offerings.

Second, is the proposal by Portland State. it would require massive support from the State Legislature and does nothing to preserve existing investments or spur private development in that area. It is a large publicly funded University campus that will not be going anywhere. This area does not need the City's help. Portland State can and should pursue a top quality venue for the use of their students and faculty. But, this is not the place for the City's primary concert venue, nor should students have to compete with professional companies for use of the space.

Third, the reconstruction of the Keller Auditorium would finally put in place the kind of world class venue that was initially envisioned for that location opposite to and integrated with the world class Halprin designed Forecourt Fountain. This investment would preserve and support the public investments in streets, parks and public art that runs down the spine of the SW portion of downtown. It would provide the necessary condition to spur private investments to adapt and repurpose the over abundance of office use in the SW of downtown. Do not let this whole segment of the SW downtown wither away. This area does need your vision and a public commitment. Please be strategic about your decision for the location for a new concert and theater venue. Please support and accept the reimagined, reengineered, redesigned Keller, the Halprin Landscape Conservancy Keller Auditorium Renovation Design Concept Report. Make this your legacy for Portland.

Respectfully, Susan and Ted Schneider

455-457

Personal Endorsement of Halprin Landscape Conservancy Vision for Our Next Keller

May 29th, 2024

Dear Mr. Mayor & City Commissioners,

My name is Xavier D. Stickler, and while you may recognize me from my involvement in the downtown community, I am speaking here today on my own behalf, but particularly from the perspective of a student of architecture and planning at PSU. I'm here today to ask a One Big Question: you merely interested, or are you genuinely committed?

Are you interested in downtown's recovery, or are you committed to investing in the heart of our entire region, the center of its cultural heritage, and what I believe will be the birthplace of our city's renaissance?

Are you interested in the benefits of preservation, or are you committed to maintaining our intergenerational landmarks, while yet still reimagining them to be fit for the 21st Century?

Are you interested in the feel-good of a new project that espouses sustainable branding, or are you committed to sustainability by prioritizing less carbon-intensive infrastructure?

And to the administration of my University--who has correctly identified our school's diversity as its greatest strength--are you interested in supporting BIPOC, first-gen, and

queer students, or are you committed to giving us the support that we need by solving the epidemic of student homelessness that disproportionately effects us, and which has effected 19% of all students--that is 1 in 5—in the last year alone? In the current crisis, I cannot see how the University can justify spending any more human, political, or financial capital (be it City, State, or philanthropic funds) on redevelopment when what we desperately need as students is affordable housing.

Interested... or committed.

Commissioners, I am aware you have a complex question before you, but one with what I believe is a simple answer. Austerity has never saved a city, investment has. Bureaucratic paralysis has never restored civic pride, forward motion has. Withdrawing and abandoning historic resources from their cultural district has never made a city great—vision has. And that is exactly what HLC has proposed here today: a Vision that is reflective of the values of Portlanders, honors and connects with Keller Fountain, and is the right project at the right time.

In closing: I'd ask you to listen to the community, to the people who know downtown the best, and Keep the Keller. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Xavier D. Stickler

455-457

Connie Kirk
The Portland Plaza
Portland, OR 97201-5418

May 29, 2024

TO: Mayor Ted Wheeler
Commissioners Carmen Rubio, Mingus Mapps, Rene Gonzales, Dan Ryan
1221 SW 4th Avenue
Portland, OR 97204

RE: Keller Auditorium Renovation

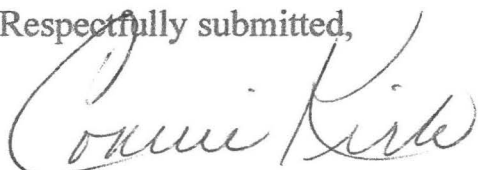
Thank you, Mayor Wheeler, and esteemed Commissioners for your welcome. My name is Connie Kirk. I'm an actor and editor based in Portland, Oregon, testifying before the civic equivalent of an all star cast.

I completed my Masters Degree at New York University in the field of Media, Culture and Communication, where I pursued doctoral studies under the auspices of the late media philosopher, Dr. Neil Postman. Dr. Postman warned that democracy would be under siege by disinformation, by substantive journalism being supplanted by spin. I'll get to the Keller but I would be remiss if I didn't reiterate that the Arts entertain but also educate and enlighten. They're the spirited and spirit-filled antidote to disinformation and a rise in Nationalism. On the heels of Memorial Day weekend, I am reminded of my late father's service as a combat veteran in World War Two. He served in the Ninth Armored Division as a tank fighter in the Battle of the Bulge. I sit here today because he and thousands of diverse service men, women and transgender service personnel served here and abroad.

I am endorsing the 21st Century Keller Project in its current location. It is well placed to thrive in the heart of Portland's downtown. Where the Arts thrive, so, too, the economy. This is confirmed at Americansforthearts.org, where one is able to track (by city and state) their Arts and Economic Prosperity Study (AEP6 attached for the City of Portland). Their data backs their claim that "Arts organizations provide jobs and generate government revenue and are the cornerstone of tourism and downtown revitalization."

The current Keller, with its historic locale, offers an ideal urban infrastructure for such revitalization with 4,500 parking spaces, 2,700 rooms of four star hotels, nearby restaurants, mass transit, residences and offices. Halprin's vision weaves in the area's natural beauty by conjoining Keller Park, where stunning multi-media will enhance and increase outdoor performances. Their vision will expand job growth and joy downtown with a stated commitment to equity and inclusion. The 21st Century Keller Project will be Portland's Lincoln Center— but better. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,



Connie Kirk

The Economic and Social Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations and Their Audiences in City of Portland, OR

Direct Economic Activity	Organizations	Audiences	Total Expenditures
Total Industry Expenditures (FY2022)	\$237,827,427	\$167,314,696	\$405,142,123

Economic Impact of Spending by Arts and Culture Organizations and Their Audiences

Total Economic Impacts (includes direct, indirect, and induced impacts)	Organizations	Audiences	Total Impacts
Employment (Jobs)	4,435	2,011	6,446
Personal Income Paid to Residents	\$215,696,898	\$93,496,443	\$309,193,341
Local Tax Revenue (city and county)	\$4,995,490	\$5,493,305	\$10,488,795
State Tax Revenue	\$9,694,295	\$5,513,491	\$15,207,786
Federal Tax Revenue	\$44,442,832	\$17,990,473	\$62,433,305

Event-Related Spending by Arts and Culture Audiences Totaled \$167.3 million

Attendance to Arts and Culture Events	Local ¹ Attendees	Nonlocal ¹ Attendees	All Attendees
Total Attendance to In-Person Events	3,116,266	1,473,228	4,589,494
Percentage of Total Attendance	67.9%	32.1%	100.0%
Average Per Person, Per Event Expenditure	\$27.59	\$55.21	\$36.45
Total Event-Related Expenditures	\$85,977,778	\$81,336,918	\$167,314,696

Nonprofit Arts and Culture Audiences Spend an Average of \$36.45 Per Person, Per Event

Category of Event-Related Expenditure	Local ¹ Attendees	Nonlocal ¹ Attendees	All Attendees
Food and Drink	\$13.99	\$19.10	\$15.63
Retail Shopping	\$3.90	\$11.89	\$6.47
Overnight Lodging (one night only)	\$0.89	\$10.34	\$3.92
Local Transportation	\$3.43	\$6.15	\$4.30
Clothing and Accessories	\$1.83	\$3.80	\$2.46
Groceries and Supplies	\$1.71	\$2.29	\$1.90
Childcare	\$0.55	\$0.71	\$0.60
Other/Miscellaneous	\$1.29	\$0.93	\$1.17
Overall Average Per Person, Per Event	\$27.59	\$55.21	\$36.45

Source: Arts & Economic Prosperity 6: The Economic and Social Impact Study of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations and Their Audiences in the City of Portland. For more information about this study or about other cultural initiatives in the City of Portland, contact the Regional Arts & Culture Council.

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Past studies have focused primarily on the financial, economic, and tourism contributions of the nonprofit arts and culture industry. AEP6 expands beyond those topics to include measures of social impact. Surveys completed by individual attendees in the the City of Portland demonstrate an appreciation for how the arts and culture impacts the development and well-being of the community and its residents.

Audiences Demonstrate Appreciation for the Impact of Arts and Culture

Level of Agreement with Social Impact Statements	Audiences
"This venue or facility is an important pillar for me within my community."	80.2%
"I would feel a great sense of loss if this activity or venue were no longer available."	87.9%
"This activity or venue is inspiring a sense of pride in this neighborhood or community."	87.2%
"My attendance is my way of ensuring that this activity or venue is preserved for future generations"	85.1%

About This Study

Americans for the Arts conducted AEP6 to document the economic and social benefits of the nation's nonprofit arts and culture industry. The study was conducted in 373 diverse communities and regions across the country, representing all 50 states and Puerto Rico. **The Regional Arts & Culture Council joined the study on behalf of the City of Portland.** For additional information including the national report, summaries for the 373 communities, an online calculator, and a description of the project methodology, visit www.AEP6.AmericansForTheArts.org.

Surveys of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations

Nationally, detailed information was collected from 16,399 nonprofit arts and culture organizations about their FY2022 expenditures (e.g., labor, local and non-local artists, operations, materials, facilities, and asset acquisition), as well as their event attendance, in-kind contributions, and volunteerism. Surveys were collected from February through July 2023. Some organizations only provided total expenditures and attendance (they are included in the study). Responding organizations had budgets ranging from a low of \$0 to a high of \$375 million. Response rates for the 373 communities averaged 43.9% and ranged from 5% to 100%. **In the City of Portland, 184 of the 894 total eligible nonprofit arts and culture organizations identified by the Regional Arts & Culture Council provided the financial and attendance information required for the study analysis—an overall participation rate of 20.6%.** It is important to note that each study region's results are based solely on the survey data collected. No estimates have been made to account for non-respondents. Therefore, the less-than-100 percent response rates suggest an understatement of the economic impact findings.

Surveys of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Audiences

Audience-intercept surveying, a common and accepted research method, was conducted to measure event-related spending by audiences. Attendees were asked to complete a short survey while attending an event. Nationally, a total of 224,677 attendees completed the survey. The randomly selected respondents provided itemized expenditure data on attendance-related activities such as meals, souvenirs, transportation, and lodging, as well as socioeconomic information, ZIP code of primary residence, and four social impact questions. Data was collected from May 2022 through June 2023 at a broad range of both paid and free events. **In the City of Portland, a total of 1,300 valid audience-intercept surveys were collected from attendees to nonprofit arts and culture performances, events, exhibits, and special events during the period from May 2022 through June 2023.**

Studying Economic Impact Using Input-Output Analysis

Americans for the Arts uses the IMPLAN platform to create the customized models for each of the 373 study regions. Input-output models calculate the interdependencies between various sectors or industries within a region. This analysis traces how many times a dollar is respent within the local economy before it leaks out, and it quantifies the economic impact of each round of spending. This form of economic analysis is well suited for AEP studies because it can be customized specifically to each participating community, region, or state. **To complete this analysis for the City of Portland, the researchers used the IMPLAN platform to build a customized input-output model based on the unique economic and industrial characteristics of Multnomah County.**

Research Notes:

¹ For the purpose of this study, local attendees live within Multnomah County; nonlocals live elsewhere.



455-457

To: Portland City Council

From: Kal Toth, Ph.D., P.Eng.

Dated: May 29, 2024

Subject: Keller Auditorium Improvement and Upgrade Project

Mayor Wheeler and Commissioners: Thank you for this opportunity to speak.

My name is Dr. Kal Toth. I am a member of the Downtown Neighborhood Association and a retired Portland State University Computer Science faculty member. I am a software engineering professional having worked on numerous information technology projects over my career.

I greatly respect fellow Portlanders and the downtown neighborhood for developing and/or supporting the proposal to significantly upgrade Keller Auditorium while incorporating Keller Fountain into the cultural experience.

Yes, Keller Auditorium needs seismic, aesthetic, acoustic and other upgrades. But when all factors are taken into account, upgrading the existing performing arts building into a dynamic world class structure is far better for the City than letting the Keller go fallow and/or demolishing it.

Consider that Portlanders and out-of-town visitors attending performances have access to at least ten area parking facilities; a dozen local restaurants at various price points; and many hotels in the immediate vicinity. They can also use our public transit system to get to the Keller from virtually any part of Metro Portland.

Failing to add value to the Keller would erode the inner city's long-term potential. Upgrading what we already have would invigorate Portland's cultural heart.

I strongly urge City Council to support this vital project.

Thank you for your time.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "K.C. Toth". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "M" at the end.

Dr. Kalman C. Toth, Ph.D., P. Eng. (retired)

Susan Rinker's Testimony on May 29th: #18 for Agenda Item "455 – Accept updated Halprin Landscape Conservancy Keller Auditorium Renovation

I, Susan Rinker, am an active member of the Halprin Landscape Conservancy Keller Task Force. I also represent the Portland Plaza, whose Board and residents have strongly endorsed the 21st Century Keller project. I/we have given many hours to promote what could and should be a much improved destination for audiences: not only in our surrounding neighborhood but also for audiences in greater metropolitan Portland. Without it, the core and soul of Portland's cultural district would be devastated!!

However, this the best and only choice you have to ensure the right project at the right time! Our renovation will be completed sooner with either the original plan or newly adapted sequential concept which balances performance time with architectural construction. The 21st Century Keller plan is more economical with the city already owning the land and its existing zoning. With the Keller's rich Portland legacy of 100+ years, and a beloved Portland icon, **You, our Mayor and City Commissioners, have the power this summer to leave the best legacy of this City Council, by supporting and voting for the reimagined Keller, Urban Plaza and Keller Fountain!**

Dean Barnett
2211 SW 1st #1402
Portland 97201

drs.barnett89@gmail.com
In Favor of Item 455

Infrastructure

Imagine a theater patron's experience with the renovated Keller. The experience will include the performance of the moment, enhanced acoustics and creature comforts, and the iconic fountain and plaza. Conveniently adjacent infrastructure also contributes to the Keller experience. Adequate parking, mostly within a block, for efficient pedestrian and improved ADA auditorium access, restaurants interspersed among the parking options offering a variety of food and refreshment, and Hotels within easy walking distance are all included.

Keller renovation as described crafts the Auditorium into a contemporary jewel in Portland's Cultural District. The current setting for that jewel is an array of immediately adjacent parking, restaurants, hotels and the iconic Keller Fountain.

No alternate location can provide similar adjacent infrastructure for a major performance venue.

You must approve the proposed Keller renovation.

29 May 2024

Portland City Council

Re: Testimony in Favor of Renovating Keller Auditorium

Members of the Council, Good Afternoon:

My name is Rudolph Barton, 1920 South River Drive, Portland.

I am speaking in support for renovating Keller Auditorium. Today's meeting is not about architecture; we're not there yet. Instead, I wish to address urban design in Portland. Great cities all have great spaces for communal gatherings – inside in remarkable institutions and outside as a dynamic embodiment of a shared civic realm. Both are necessary for a city to be great.

For over forty years I have been involved with urban design in Portland as a professor of architecture, urban design consultant and former member of the Portland Design Commission.

In the private sector, I have been engaged in numerous studies to select sites for performing arts centers. Such studies always involve evaluating objective, and subjective, criteria such as ease of public access, minimizing public infrastructure costs, and weighing short-term against long-term benefits.

For me, the most important criterium is – which site can best maximize its “halo effect?” In essence, which site has the capacity to anchor and build upon Portland's adopted urban design programs, can maximize connections with encircling properties, to best stimulate and inspire the city's public life.

I firmly believe that renovation of the Keller is the best option before you. It offers, by far, greater opportunities to reinforce decades of public investments; it already has a world-renown civic fountain and sequence of open spaces. Furthermore, the Keller option will be the strongest catalyst for vibrant private development in its radius, particularly along Market and Clay streets. With a revamped Keller at its center, a short walk connects the cultural institutions along the South Park Blocks with the riverfront.

Great cities require vision. Portland can be a truly great city. Thank you for your consideration.

L. Rudolph Barton 
Professor Emeritus, Portland State University, School of Architecture
1920 South River Drive
Portland, OR 97201

Portland City Council Meeting
 Wednesday, May 29, 2024 2:00 p.m.
 Verbal Testimony

	Agenda Item	Name
1	455-457	LaJune Thorson
2	455-457	Kevin Schoelen
3	455-457	Jen Fuentes Luna
4	455-457	Sophia Francis
5	455-457	Omar Sanchez
6	455-457	Susan Dixon
7	455-457	Erica Rodriguez-Ortiz
8	455-457	Johnny Le
9	455-457	Dean Barnett
10	455-457	Kleverson Domingo Villanue
11	455-457	Carole Morse
12	455-457	Diana Stuart
13	455-457	John Russell
14	455-457	Ethan Sperry
15	455-457	Tom Reichert
16	455-457	Darrell Grant
17	455-457	Michael Curry
18	455-457	Susan Rinker
19	455-457	Xavier Stickler
20	455-457	Kevin Lux
21	455-457	Bob Naito
22	455-457	Katie Quick
23	455-457	Linda McKim-Bell
24	455-457	David Jamieson
25	455-457	Emily Horton
26	455-457	Helen Ying
27	455-457	Connie DeNault
28	455-457	Be Marston
29	455-457	Michael Tingley
30	455-457	Mont Chris Hubbard
31	455-457	Nicole Possert
32	455-457	Adam Shalleck
33	455-457	Connie Kirk
34	455-457	Joel Thorson
35	455-457	Dr. Kalman Toth
36	455-457	Emily Sahler
37	455-457	Don Mazziotti
38	455-457	Rose Venetucci
39	455-457	Rudolph Barton
40	455-457	James Peterson
41	455-457	George Schweitzer

	Agenda Item	Name
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43	455-457	Chris Finks
44	455-457	Bill Foster
45	455-457	Marian Debardeleben
46	455-457	Kate Dickson
47	455-457	Mark Stevenson
48	455-457	Remember (Remy) Watts
49	455-457	Angela Jackson
50	455-457	Bashar Wali
51	455-457	Stan Penkin
52	455-457	Kathleen Miller
53	455-457	John Liu
54	455-457	Anita Davidson
55	455-457	Brad Perkins
56	455-457	Robert Grummel
57	455-457	Vadim Mozyrsky
58	455-457	Derek Trost
59	455-457	Steven Koch
60	455-457	Mary Coolidge
61	455-457	Marion McNamara