



**PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION**

Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland

# South Park Blocks Master Plan

## — Visioning Survey Results

**September 2019**



# Introduction

As part of Portland Parks & Recreation’s efforts to shape the future of the South Park Blocks, a community survey was conducted between July 17 and July 29, 2019. Sixty online surveys and 62 paper surveys were submitted for a total of 122 responses.

The survey asked community members about their interaction with the park, their views on existing park features, and priorities for new features. Paper copies of the survey were made available at the “Party in the Park” community event on July 17 and through other community events during the comment period. An online version of the survey was also available on the South Park Blocks Master Plan project web site. Both versions of the survey asked the same questions. This report includes the results of all surveys received.

## Survey Respondent Demographics

### Where do you live?

	Percentage	Responses
Northwest Portland	2.70%	3
Southwest Portland	63.06%	70
North Portland	1.80%	2
Northeast Portland	7.21%	8
Southeast Portland	6.31%	7
East Portland	0.00%	0
Portland Metropolitan Area	9.01%	10
Outside Portland Metropolitan Area	6.31%	7
Prefer Not to Answer	3.60%	4

### What year were you born?

	Percentage	Responses
After 2000	6.14%	7
1990-1999	5.26%	6
1980-1989	7.02%	8
1970-1979	11.40%	13
1960-1969	8.77%	10
1950-1959	23.68%	27
1940-1949	28.07%	32
Before 1940	6.14%	7
Prefer not to answer	3.51%	4

**When asked to identify your racial or ethnic identity, how do you identify?** (Check all that apply)

	Percentage	Responses
American Indian or Alaska Native	2.70%	3
Asian or Asian American	7.21%	8
Black or African American	2.70%	3
Hispanic or Latino/A/X	4.50%	5
Middle Eastern/North African	0.90%	1
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.90%	1
White	77.48%	86
Unknown/Don't Know	0.90%	1
Prefer not to answer	9.01%	10
Not listed above (please specify)	1.80%	2*

\*American European Mediterranean; Jewish

**How do you identify your gender?**

	Percentage	Responses
Female	60.55%	66
Male	32.11%	35
Transmasculine	0.00%	0
Transfeminine	0.00%	0
Genderqueer/Androgynous	1.83%	2
Prefer not to answer	5.50%	6
Not listed above (please specify)	0.00%	0

**Do you or a family member live with a disability or identify as a disabled person?**

	Percentage	Responses
Yes	20.18%	22
No	79.82%	87

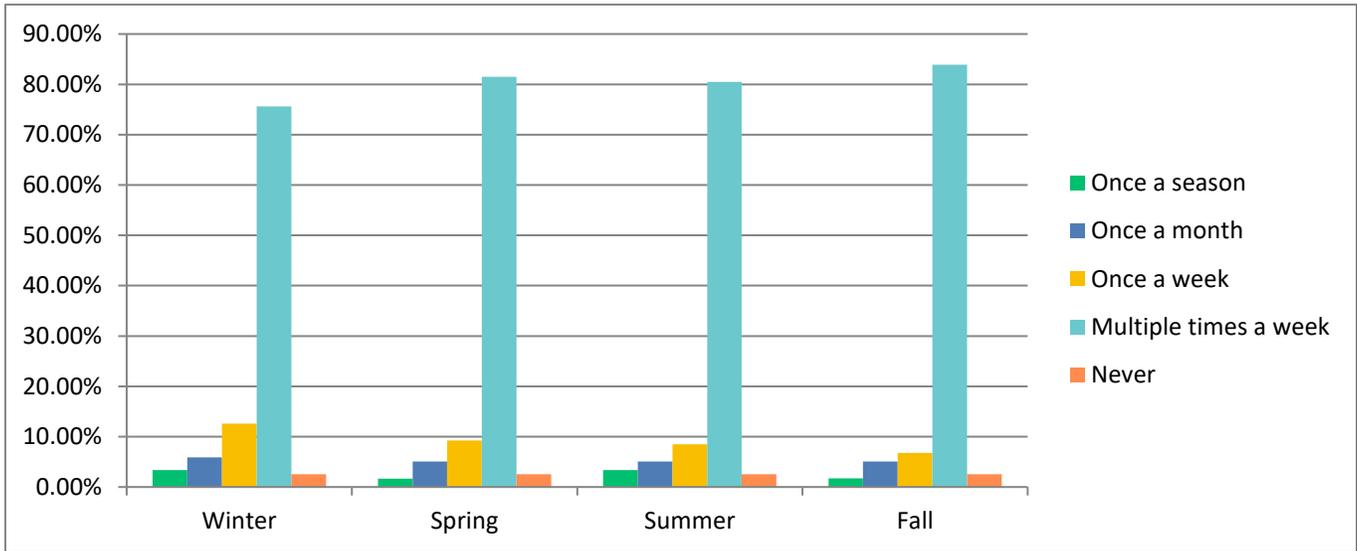
**If yes, please described the nature of you and/or your family member's disability.**  
(Check all that apply)

	Percentage	Responses
Mobility (e.g., walking, climbing stairs)	50.00%	13
Visual (e.g., blind, low vision)	7.69%	2
Deaf or hard-of-hearing	15.38%	4
Cognitive (e.g., traumatic brain injury, learning disability)	3.85%	1
Mental Health (e.g., anxiety, PTSD)	11.54%	3
Intellectual or developmental (e.g., Down syndrome, fragile X syndrome)	7.69%	2
Invisible (e.g., diabetes, HIV, cancer)	7.69%	2
Prefer not to disclose	19.23%	5
Prefer to describe	11.54%	3*

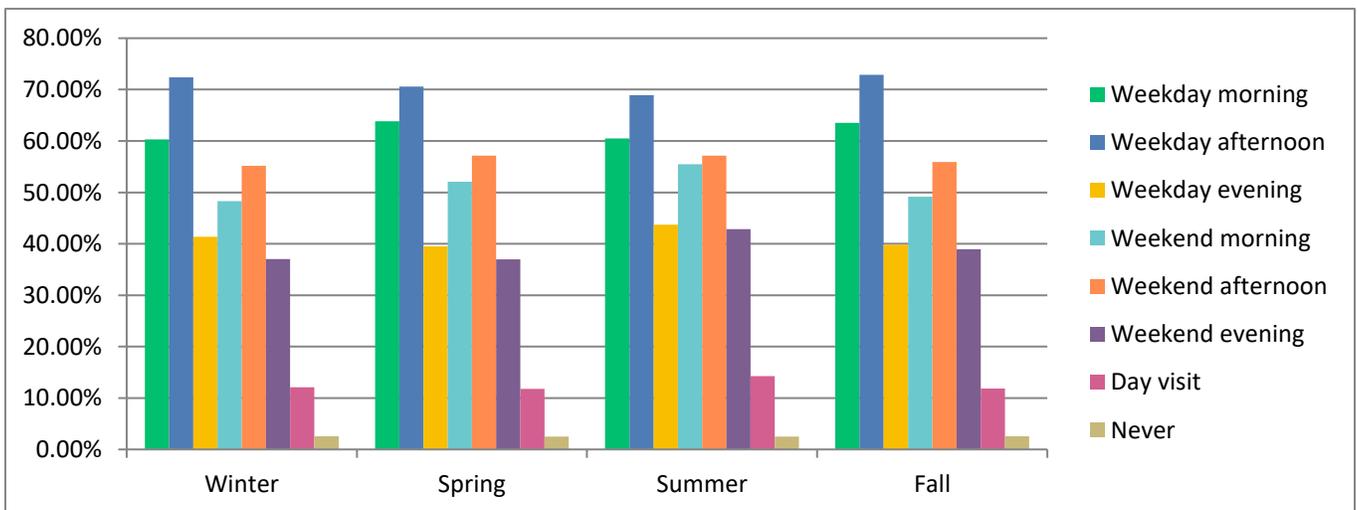
\* Husband has Alzheimer's; Autism spectrum; Hearing loss, but not for NOISE--which I hear BETTER than most other people. Please end the use of two-cycle engines, vehicle idling, compressor engine use, etc. in the park.

# Survey Results

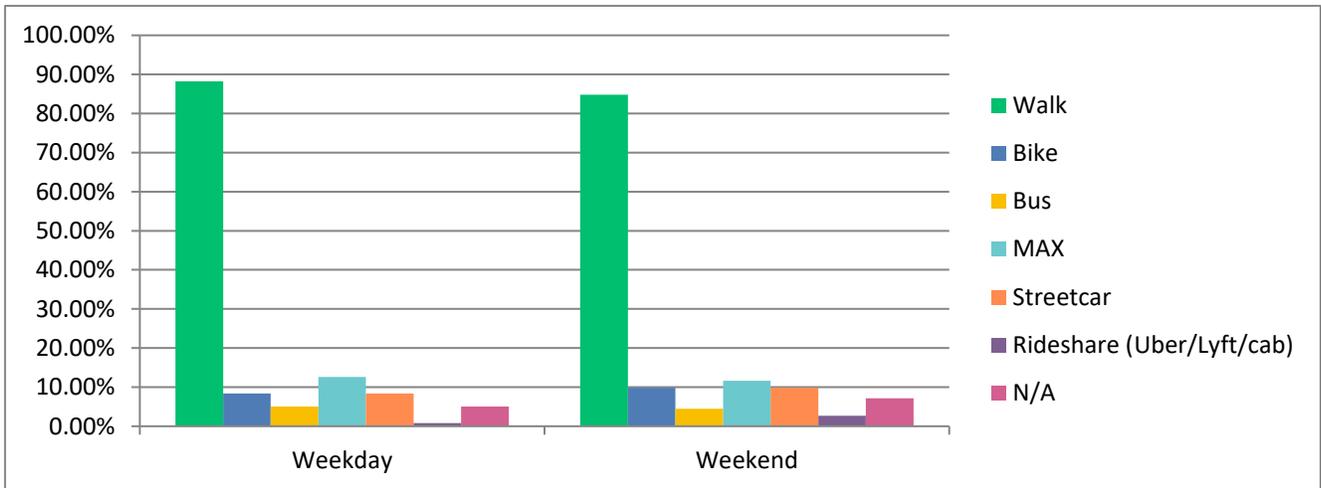
**1. On average, how often do you visit or travel through the South Park Blocks in winter, spring, summer, and fall?**



**2. What time of day do you visit or travel through the South Park Blocks in winter, spring, summer, and fall?**



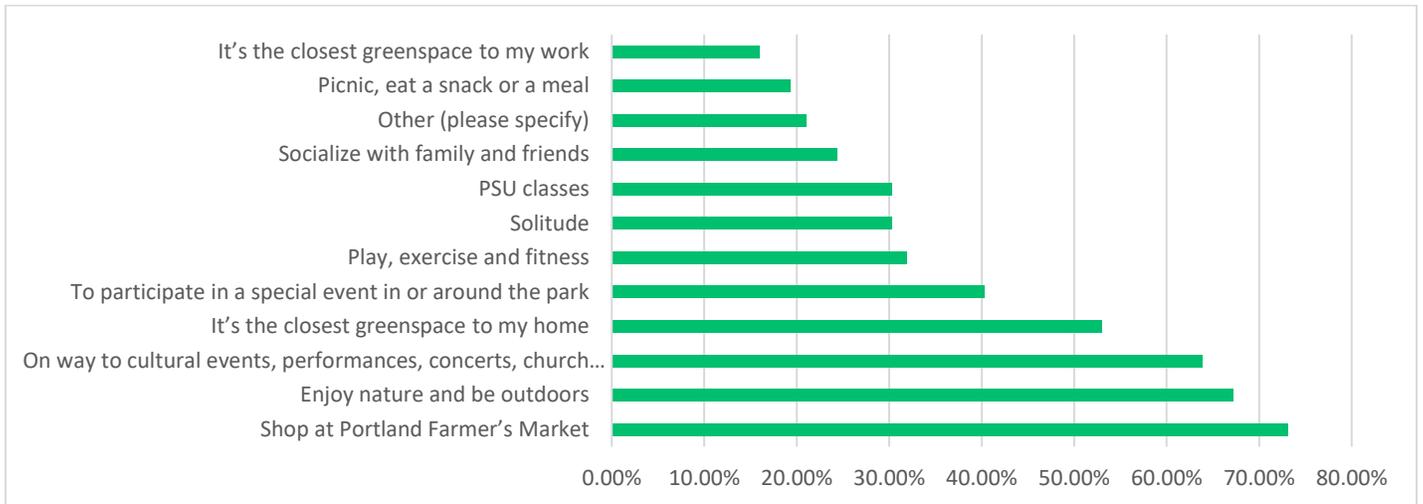
### 3. How do you usually travel to the South Park Blocks on a weekday and weekend day?



#### Responses to “other” and “not listed above”

- Car (6) - Park along the park blocks instead of walking from elsewhere in downtown
- Skateboard
- Walk through the park to visit the museums and cultural events
- I have an electric scooter as I am disabled
- Transit
- Live here on the Park Blocks
- I own the two front food carts (Bashas and Blazin Burrito)

#### 4. Why do you usually visit the South Park Blocks? (Check all that apply)



#### Responses to "other" and "not listed above"

- Shade in summer
- In transit to other destinations including shopping, meetings, and museums & events
- On my way to work
- On the way to the library or grocery store
- To shopping or walk above PSU or walk to town SPB clean-up volunteer once a week
- I live one block away and go through the park for my daily activities: to grocery shop, visit Art Museum, nearby coffee shops, restaurants, on my way to streetcar stop - for everything
- Native American Community Center
- I live there so I enjoy it all the time. We eat on our deck at night and enjoy
- I live on the SPB. This Park is my front yard. I am a part of Friends of the South Park Blocks
- Live in area
- Listen to music at the PSU amphitheater
- I work at PSU and frequently visit PSU building around park blocks
- Walk the dog (2)
- Shop at Safeway; cultural events in the district
- Work meetings in the area
- Going through to do my errands during the day!
- For its beauty
- On my way to the gym or Safeway
- Tue: Cleanup South Park Blocks Volunteer
- I commute along the Park Blocks
- I own the two front food carts (Bashas and Blazin Burrito)
- First, it's the most beautiful area of downtown, Old Town, and The Pearl and even if not my destination I walk it as a route between two points within downtown. Second, non-PSU classes.

**5. How would you rate the following features and experiences of the South Park Blocks?**

<b>Feature</b>	<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Satisfactory/ Adequate</b>
Trees	64.29%	23.21%
Landscaping	48.21%	28.57%
Pedestrian movement	47.32%	37.50%
Park pathways	40.18%	41.96%
Accessibility	36.36%	38.18%
Street crossings	20.72%	50.45%
Food vendors	18.18%	34.55%
Lighting	18.02%	41.44%
Access to drinking water	17.27%	33.64%
Event facilities	15.60%	32.11%
Maps and signage	15.60%	44.95%
Bicycle movement	12.84%	39.45%
Safety	12.39%	32.74%
Portland Loo	8.41%	19.63%

<b>Feature</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>
Safety	50.44%
Access to drinking water	34.55%
Portland Loo	32.71%
Lighting	27.93%
Food vendors	27.27%
Street crossings	25.23%
Event facilities	24.77%
Maps and signage	23.85%
Bicycle movement	23.85%
Landscaping	21.43%
Park pathways	14.29%
Pedestrian movement	11.61%
Trees	10.71%
Accessibility	7.27%

**6. As we plan improvements for the park during the master plan process, how important are these features to you?**

Feature	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Safety	86.96%	11.30%	0.00%
Landscaping	86.09%	10.43%	0.00%
Trees	84.21%	12.28%	1.75%
Pedestrian movement	83.04%	9.82%	4.46%
Park pathways	80.70%	13.16%	3.51%
Street crossings	79.82%	14.04%	3.51%
Lighting	67.83%	26.09%	2.61%
Accessibility	59.65%	25.44%	10.53%
Access to drinking water	46.09%	40.00%	10.43%
Maps and signage	36.84%	38.60%	19.30%
Bicycle movement	35.09%	29.82%	26.32%
Portland Loo	33.63%	37.17%	19.47%
Event facilities	30.97%	43.36%	16.81%
Food vendors	25.89%	43.75%	23.21%

**7. What historic or iconic features of the South Park Blocks are most important to you?**

*\*Survey respondents were asked to rank eight (8) features in order of importance. For the following table, higher scores indicate that more survey respondents ranked that feature as important.*

Rank	Feature	Score
1	Trees	6.78
2	Planting areas	5.02
3	Pathway design	4.8
4	Type of landscaping	4.77
5	Statues/memorials/public art	4.29
6	Lighting	4.27
7	Plaza areas (e.g. Shemanski plaza)	3.8
8	Material types (e.g. Pavement types)	2.69

## 8. What would you like to see more of in the South Park Blocks?

*\*Survey respondents were asked to select their top five (5) priorities from a list of seventeen (17) choices. The following is ranked average with higher scores indicating greater preference.*

Overall Ranking	Choice	Ranked Average
1	Native plantings and habitat	2.22
2	Places for rest and quiet	1.89
3	Enjoy additional, more diverse public art	1.32
4	Cultural performances	1.18
5	Community event space	1.04
6	Community gardens	0.96
7	Live music	0.90
8	Paved paths	0.85
9	Open lawn	0.80
10	Rain gardens	0.78
11	Children's play areas	0.71
12	Picnic areas	0.37
13	Covered spaces	0.34
14	Fitness equipment	0.28
15	Informal, pick-up sports, like frisbee	0.26
16	Movies	0.24
17	Ceremony spaces	0.10

### Other responses:

- Dog park (2)
- Clean, safe places to sit
- "Sports" appropriate for SPB could include Tai Chi, yoga
- Big Trees
- Safety
- Less trash
- Fewer homeless
- Skate park
- Open space is a resource and should remain open space. Also, it's a historic resource!
- I love the current art. There is just enough diversity as there are two contemporary works and number of historical. No more is needed.
- 1st priority dyed and stamped concrete crosswalks along the park centerline crossings, preferably as speed tables. Also, I have only 3 priorities, never mind 5, because the park blocks are very good as is. Don't mess them up with too many changes.
- 1st Priority: Fix the hole! 935 SW Main is the best residential site in the city. It should house people, NOT CARS!

## 9. What issues keep you from visiting the South Park Blocks more often?



### Other Responses:

- Homeless (5) -- The homeless dominate the best spaces, abusive behavior
- Trash and garbage (4)
- Drug users (2) - needles in park
- Hours (2) - At night I have been told to leave by the police / patrol services
- Dark and shady (2) - Fewer trees & more diverse landscape.
- Noise, stench of public urination, smoking, defecation
- Unsafe
- Need Increased ranger presence
- Accessibility
- Need more tables
- Leaf Blowers
- In live in WA :(

# Open-ended Responses to Questions

Two questions gave participants the opportunity for open-ended responses. The responses were sorted by themes, and the number shown after the heading indicates how many times the topic was mentioned. Some people addressed more than one topic in their responses to these questions. Comments that addressed multiple topics were divided and appear as separate responses under the most relevant theme headings.

## **9a. If you indicated that you are concerned about safety and/or don't feel welcome in the South Park Blocks, please tell us more. We want to make Portland Parks & Recreation spaces safe and welcoming for all.**

### **Houseless / Mental Health Issues (18)**

- Homeless in groups discourage us from walking near them. A big negative.
- The homeless leave trash and clothes. They take up sidewalks so you can't use them.
- Homelessness has become a significant problem, as it has in all of Portland. Many are mentally ill and it is frightening at night. I look forward to the day when we finally get a compassionate and humane grasp on this issue.
- Portland needs to provide more places for homeless individuals. The parks can help minimally by providing more public restroom facilities.
- There seems to be no way to control the day residents/homeless who congregate in the SPBs. These groups cause me concern over my personal safety. These groups tend not to respect the park environs and leave behind mess for others to clean up.
- Although I don't feel too unsafe, there are often lots of homeless people lying on the benches, and younger people partying rowdily around the plaza.
- There are often ranters going through the park yelling about how angry they are with the world. There are also often "campers" sitting or lying around with garbage strewn around them. They should at least keep the place clean. The city needs to provide them with a homeless shelter.
- Improve mental health and opioid crisis.
- Often homeless folks hanging around.
- I treat the homeless with respect and they return the favor but there are some that act out with drugs and mental illness.
- Large groups of homeless at multiple benches on the center pathway make it uncomfortable to walk through a defined area with people yelling at you from benches on both sides.
- All though the park closes at night, find the homeless seem to be using all the benches in the morning. They also inhabit the sidewalks around the park making it not easy to traverse the park.
- Clean up trash and biohazards left by homeless.
- No sleeping/camping in park.
- The homeless seem more numerous & more aggressive. It's scary at night and wasn't 4 yrs. ago. Groups set up camps in the summer for a few nights and leave a large amount of garbage.

There's screaming and fighting at all hours, and the cops don't do anything about that or for people suffering psychosis.

- Homeless are a problem in the park, especially since children are often present.
- I do not feel unsafe in the park blocks; however, I feel like it has become a residential space for some of those that are house-less. I do not feel comfortable enjoying the space without having to keep an eye on my possessions and I often find that a space I would like to utilize is full of trash/shopping carts and people that look like they may or may not be dead.
- Quit worrying about "housing," which is a boon to developers & does not help people who can't/won't participate in society.

### **Disruptive Behavior (17)**

- Although it seems less this year, there are still groups of kids and adults that linger there and cause concern as I walk through.
- Other concerns about disruptive behavior by some park visitors - loud, threatening, intoxicated.
- Concern about groups of aggressive acting people, being loud, aggressive, acting unpredictably.
- I have seen some truly disturbing episodes occur on the Park Blocks. I work right across the street and my window faces them. It takes a heavy toll sometimes.
- There have been people who have attacked others in park.
- Larger groups of folks are often present smoking, playing music on speakers, sometimes riding bikes or skateboarding. I've witnessed multiple verbal and occasional physical fights there.
- The amount of groups of transient folks is intimidating.
- Every, single time I walk through the park, I have to dodge some crazy person. Sometimes they are sitting in the middle of the path, sometimes they are swinging the metal lid of a trash can, sometimes, they are shooting up, and sometimes I have to walk through a cloud of smoke. It is INSANE. The parks are \*supposed\* to be for the community, not for the benefit of people who are in need of mental health, or jail.
- I am concerned about mentally ill and aggressive people who live in the park during the day and move to near sidewalks at night.
- I am concerned about aggressive homeless people who take over areas in the park making me feel unwelcome and unsafe. Also, they can be very loud at inappropriate times.
- I work at the Portland Art Museum and often don't feel comfortable just taking a break there b/c of people camping out for the day/ smoking/ drinking or otherwise claiming space.
- There are some regular park visitors who seem to be experiencing mental distress. They are often disruptive and definitely make the park less welcoming. This is not a park problem, but an example of how the city/county can have a positive effect on quality of life by providing mental health care and use less force, more care. We all benefit when people are taken care of.
- Homeless and substance abusers are unpredictable and frightening.

- Being approached/harassed by unsavory individual for drugs, cigarettes, money or unwanted contact.
- Some acting out groups that make noise, leave garbage, and use loud foul language. After hours as well.
- Concerned about loitering and aggressive behavior.
- Lots of people sitting/laying with dogs & gear.

### **Drug and Alcohol Use (11)**

- We don't feel safe with the drug dealers and users. We fear being attacked and robbed.
- This is the only place I have personally walked through that I saw someone shooting up.
- I see a lot of drug abuse, violence, and unaddressed mental health episodes/concerns almost daily in the park blocks. Obviously, this is not the sole responsibility of the Parks Department and represents unmet needs and failures of a lot of different systems on a local and national scale.
- I have often encountered people consuming alcohol, smoking tobacco/cannabis, in an intoxicated condition and passed out on the ground/benches.
- There is drug selling activity and persons with addiction/mental health issues in the SPB.
- Too many people openly doing drugs in the park.
- Opioid use and mentally unhealthy people who can't hold a job loiter in the park dropped hypodermic needles near children and pets.
- Lots of people smoking marijuana.
- The number of questionable people is disturbing. The smell of marijuana, and sight of needles is disturbing. I really question the use of my tax \$\$.
- I am concerned about the trash they leave, esp. the needles.
- I don't take my kids here because of the drug paraphernalia.

### **Park Ranger and Police Patrols (11)**

- Should be better patrolled because of homeless problem and drugs etc.
- Littering - without adequate patrolling.
- Very rarely see rangers.
- We need more Ranger presence.
- I think this study and the improvements could include a park ranger who walks the site all day between Salmon and the southern end of PSU.
- The South Park Blocks could use more police presence and enforcement of smoking bans and loitering laws to make it more inviting to more members of the community.
- More surveillance & ranger presence.
- The loss of park rangers.
- Rangers should be full time weekends/evenings.
- Need policing of park 24/7. Need to keep vagrants, drugs, and trash out. Come on Portland step up and make it safe for all of us!
- Slightly more rangers.

### **Light and Lighting (8)**

- Better lighting
- Lighting at night not very good.
- It's a little grungy and dark.
- Lighting will help make the park safer for all users.
- I don't think a place without lights as safe anymore for walking.
- More light.
- Better lighting is needed.
- More natural sunlight needed.

### **The Park at Night (7)**

- I feel very welcome there, but I am a little concerned about safety when walking there at night.
- I don't feel to safe at night to walk there. I enjoy it from my deck.
- I walk home at night and sometimes feel unsafe w/ the people around late at night.
- Pathways are very dark, and not just late at night. Very insecure feeling.
- I was accosted, but not harmed physically, by a homeless person in March 2019 on SW Park Ave between Columbia and Clay. He was apparently delusional because he kept saying I had threatened him, which I hadn't. It was nighttime although only about 8pm. I backed away from him quickly into the street, but he followed for about a block. It scared me a lot. Now I have pepper spray in my hand whenever I walk in the Park Blocks at night.
- After 4:00pm there is a problem with vandalism. My two food carts have been vandalized multiple times, and items stolen by the nearby homeless camp.
- Enforcing park closed rule at night could unintentionally result in accidental police brutality. Has not happened yet as far as I know.

### **Shemanski Square (6)**

- Sometimes the homeless population (members of) can be intimidating in the Shemanski Park area.
- Somewhat concerned about safety walking through Shemanski.
- Seating area in Salmon Street area not welcoming to families or picnic due to smokers and drug users.
- Shemanski is too dark and look at issues there.
- I have also had negative experiences with my young son in the Shemanski Park after a play at the Newmark Theater -- vulgar language from people hanging out there and taking up space in an unwelcoming manner.
- Large groups of homeless, specifically at Shemanski Fountain area make it uncomfortable to walk through.

### **No safety concerns (4)**

- I am an old lady and never feel concerned about safety. I just walk through with confidence.
- I nearly always feel safe and welcome.

- Seems safe enough to me.
- No issues with safety for myself

### **Scooters, skateboards, bicycles (3)**

- Main safety issue is unlawful and reckless thoroughfare of e-scooters and bicycles.
- Not much, just several occasions where I have seen people almost get hit by people riding their bikes. I am not exactly sure how to minimize this problem, but that's one thing about safety I'm concerned about.
- Concerned about danger from bicycles, scooters, skateboarders running into pedestrians - esp. senior citizens.

### **Plants and Trees (3)**

- Better attention to planting plan and tree placement
- I noticed a few old trees with rotten branches and a heavy branch fell unexpectedly-almost hit someone on the head.
- I know there was talk of the trees. Some areas - though beautiful as I love the trees - some areas seem awfully dark.

### **Activities and Events (2)**

- Activities like art and farmers market would make people feel safer.
- If there were events I would go.

### **Other concerns**

- Some areas seem seedy - I like walking through but sometimes I feel uncomfortable - I certainly feel uncomfortable sitting in the park and never would.
- Permanent greeting kiosk in one of the blocks for eyes on the park.
- Remove all CARS from the east half of the Park. This is supposed to be the GREEN LOOP! We must prioritize people over cars. And activate the corridor with cafes that open up onto the park blocks!!
- More concerned about Tom McCall Waterfront. I've had a knife pulled on me at the waterfront.

## **10. Do you have any other ideas about how to improve the park, or anything else you want to tell us?**

### **Plants, trees, gardens (22)**

- I really like the green landscaping currently; rather than the seeming waste of changing out flowering plants they used to do. I would like to see more landscaping, maybe evergreens, along the pathways.
- More diverse landscape allowing light.
- Stop over planting trees.
- Trees and plantings are beautiful, so don't "overplan" the park.

- Make more garden areas in front of the Art Museum. Make it impossible/difficult for pedestrians to walk across gardens/lawns--off paths.
  - Dangerous and overcrowded trees need to be removed throughout.
  - Please do NOT cut the trees.
  - Preserve the trees.
  - Keep the trees.
  - The trees are most important to me, plants and landscaping.
  - Tree care & maintenance
  - Maintain historic trees, flowers.
  - Need arborist evaluation and improvements. Love the big, old trees, but some appear unsafe - falling branches, etc.
  - Improve the landscaping and care given to the landscaping.
  - Definitely keep it as a beautiful green space.
  - Really support more maintenance of lawn & plant materials
  - Don't remove the rose garden.
  - Planting.
  - I'd just like to voice support for restoring native plants and wildlife and making sure that the project is as eco-conscious as possible.
- With the lack of wildlife habitat, it is sad that the land isn't being used to create a better habitat. My idea is to use the leaves that fall every year to build soil in the shaded areas to support a diverse ecosystem of native, shade-loving plants. For instance, the area between the parallel walkways can be allowed to build up leaf mold, layered w/ coffee grounds to build healthy soil community. This would reduce carbon emissions and demonstrate to landowners a better way to use the land. Also, there would be more habitat for insects, worms, beneficial fungi, shade-loving plants like huckleberry and salal can be planted. When old trees die, the logs can be nurse logs. Fruit bearing trees (paw paw) can be planted. Maintenance needs will go down.
  - One aspect of the park that needs to happen is to make the plantings and trees more resilient to rising temperatures. The best way is to work with nature (permaculture). The foundation of resiliency is healthy soil. At present, the soil in the park is very poor. It is compacted, lacking in organic matter, and devoid of soil life. This is the result of traditional practices like removing dropped leaves, not covering the soil (especially in winter), and trying to grow an annual (grass) in an area where shade loving perennials are more appropriate. The solution requires less "maintenance" and more practices that support natural regeneration of the soil. The number one practice is covering the soil at all times. The dropped leaves should be allowed to remain on the ground to nourish the soil organisms that will reduce compaction, retain soil moisture, and provide services to the elms. Yes, the grass won't grow, but it doesn't grow in many areas already because of the shade. Once the soil is covered, it can regenerate. Appropriate plantings can then be made to complete the ecosystem. Test plots can be started in areas that are very shady and not attractive to grass sitters. The more areas that can be regenerated, the healthier the soil, and the healthier the trees. I strongly recommend

consulting permaculture knowledgeable sources before dismissing the idea that soil practices in the park need revamping. Thank you.

- South Park Blocks is a unique, wonderful city space. In summer, the tall trees create a cool respite from the hot city, in the winter, the sculptured tree trunks, especially when covered in snow, provide a unique beauty. This much tree space and carefully landscaped understory should be preserved for everyone in Portland. The older trees will have to be replaced, of course, but to remove them all and convert this area to an empty open field, suitable for frisbee and large group gatherings, would be a huge loss to the city.

### **Activities, Programming and Events (9)**

- Program the corridor much more!  
Let's make the park blocks and waterfront park DESTINATIONS, rather than dreadfully dead, Canada geese-dominated lawns. Look at how Oslo and Perth dramatically improved their versions!
- Live music would be cool.
- The park's otherwise great. I'd like more food carts, & events.
- I'd like to see the park as a hub for activity for all ages. Provide opportunities for games that all can engage in.
- Engage neighboring institutions more in programming activities in the SPB.
- Increased scheduled activities and events, music, markets.
- I think that more frequent organized activities that include folks from around the area (festivals, performances?) might make the park feel friendlier for more people, less empty, less opportunity to smoke/do drugs/fight.
- Bring more classical music also more bands with fine music.
- More music and arts performances to attract people

### **Houselessness, Disruptive Behavior (9)**

- Too many homeless that throw trash in the park
- It's a lovely space, but I know that all of our parks are suffering from the overall homeless situation in our city.
- Change the permissive attitude about people living in the park causing others to avoid visiting the park. Sometimes I can't sit at the streetcar stop on Market because a homeless person sleeps there during the day. We need more patrols in the park.
- How to settle down the homelessness to increase safety
- Please provide a shelter somewhere for the homeless, so that the park can be clean and enjoyed safely.
- The city needs to house the homeless.
- Remove [unhoused populations].
- Limit transient camping or clear it out early morning because that is my only safety concern. What they bring and leave behind.
- I have a lot of compassion for un-homed people and I would still like to be able to predictably enjoy communal spaces without garbage - what do we do to return our parks into community recreational areas?

### **Preserve Historic Character (9)**

- Please preserve the historic character of this already welcoming and inviting green space that is so important in this part of downtown. Adding a lot of activities and changing the character of the open unorganized spaces in the park in this small area will ruin it in my opinion as a place for people to relax outside in a green space with mostly unstructured activity - a quality rapidly disappearing from the urban landscape in this town. Please don't over-plan it!
- Maintain historic stately look when making improvements.
- Retain historical design of park.
- Preserve open spaces and historic buildings/things.
- The south park blocks are very good as they are. Don't mess them up with too many changes.
- It's a great area.
- Protect historic architecture and monuments.
- History is important. Keep the formal lines and respect the past while upgrading.
- Basically, keep it as it is.

### **Amenities and Utilities (8)**

- As a food cart owner, I would love if we could have gazebo like food "carts". The ones in downtown Beaverton are very nice, something similar to that.
- Electricity and water would be amazing as well.
- Improve park infrastructure
- Replace the irrigation system. More permeable hardscape and somewhat less grass.
- Provide one or two modestly sized open-air rain shelters somewhere between Market and Salmon Streets, just large enough for 2-4 people to wait a minute when the is just a bit too much even with hat and jacket.
- Hot dog cart would be awesome.
- Picnic area including benches or tables.
- More covered spaces would be nice for damp weather but covered spaces attract homeless.
- Please research the most permeable hardscape that can be used to allow rain to penetrate the soil and not pool and then run off, taking soil with it.

### **Paths, Walkways and Street Crossings (8)**

- We are seniors and sometimes use with a walker is harder given uneven paving in paths.
- Include and separate bike/e-scooters paths from pedestrian paths. Get rid of posts and other obstacles in pathways (traffic, parking, road signage post).
- Consider getting rid of street parking to add pedestrian and bike paths.
- Pavement easier on small wheels i.e. scooters/skateboards.
- Also, crossings could be improved - Market can be difficult and pedestrians should be given priority given it's access to the park, PSU, farmers market and street car.
- Pedestrian crossing lights at crosswalks.
- Easier street crossings. Traffic should wait for the pedestrians, not the other way around.
- First, improve each north-south street crossing from Clay to Main. I'd really loved dyed and stamped concrete (or dyed concrete pavers) speed tables. I don't like that the two centerline

paths in each block share a single zebra striped crossing. I think driver compliance would increase when they see (and feel subtly but distinctly) speed tables and see walkers 4-6 inches taller. The tables should extend to be in line with the outer edges of the centerline paths. I strongly recommend as first and most important one at Jefferson.

### **Bicycles, Scooters, Skateboards (8)**

- Skate park - let's provide a positive place for all the skateboarders to skate. it is a daily reality so let's create a positive place in South Park Blocks so park rangers don't always have to tell skaters not to skate, etc.
- Bikers walking their bikes would be great. Scooters should "scoot" elsewhere.
- Attractive trash/recycling containers would help as those without homes often leave their trash on the ground.
- Entertainment and sports are my lowest priority as the park offers a peaceful place to be in nature while in the middle of a city.
- No scooters/bicycles.
- Larger signs telling cyclists & skateboarders to use the street. Very large sign telling skateboarders not to jump on & damage stone sculpture on section 8.
- Bicycles and scooters should not be on sidewalks.
- Allow skateboarding & make surfaces more conducive to skating.

### **Maintenance (7)**

- Thank you for keeping it so clean and welcoming! I walk through twice a day with my dog and when I see glass it's always gone the next time I come through. My dog greatly appreciates it.
- Stop banning quiet smokers and clean up the trash!
- Garbage pickup
- Since it is an iconic location next to Portland's top cultural centers, maintain it. Better to keep it clean safe and free of garbage! Everyone visiting sees this park and I am certain it needs more attention
- Such a great established asset. Please keep it and make sure it survives the daily abuse.
- Too many green spaces in Portland aren't maintained properly and family safety becomes a concern.
- Keep it as clean as possible

### **Ranger and Security Patrols (7)**

- Regular Park Ranger presence.
- Send more patrols around to manage the vagrant population.
- Enforce rules about noise after 10, littering, over use of toilet, smoking on the Blocks - I think this is not allowed?
- More ranger presence at night for resident's peace of mind.
- More rangers, spend some money on the taxpayers.
- Presence of rangers
- More security patrols

### **Art, Culture and Education (5)**

- We need to celebrate the indigenous peoples who have been in Portland since time immemorial!
- Consult more w/ the ingenious communities of PDX.
- More cultural education/art in the SPB's.
- The park also has several plaques that were donated by organizations that were donated in remembrance of events like Oklahoma City bombing. It would be good to catalog all these memorial plaques and include their story in interpretive materials - maybe even have a gathering on the date of the event to teach & share w/neighbors.
- Maintain historic sculptures and statutes.

### **Streets, Parking, Green Loop (4)**

- Is there a way to make more park space and less traffic space in these blocks?
- The "Green Loop" shouldn't be so close to the children's play area at the south end of the Blocks. The proposed route takes a 90-degree turn next to playground space.
- Use of the right of way. Certain areas could have the right of way used better, such as the parking along both sides could be used for vendors or more seating, plantings, bike/scooter parking.
- Make Madison Street into a shared street. The street stops in front of the art museum and is one-way east but is two fat lanes and simply excessive for the little traffic it gets. Now fully covered by mature tree canopy, it would be perfect for rebuilding into plaza that very slowing moving cars can pass through. Raise the plaza 6 inches to the same level as the blocks as if the plaza were a giant speed table, the car ramps being west at Park Avenue (9th) and east at Park Avenue (8th). Allow parking each side and perhaps as little as one one-way driving lane. Let the lane meander a bit. Use dyed concrete pavers in patterns. Put something roughly in the middle, like a statue, fountain, or other civic art. There's a built example in Portland to see. It's not a public street and obviously made of economy materials in simplified forms, but still looks good and is clearly a shared space that drivers need to respect. It's made of the driveway among The Strand Condos, the three mid-rise towers in Harbor Place. The driveway is L shaped and connects to both River Drive and Hall Street. Google Street view includes it but see it for yourselves! Consider extending the plaza as speed table west to include the 9th Avenue part so the plaza unites the Madison pedestrian passage, art museum plaza, and the South Park Blocks. When built, I think this would be the prime event space!

### **Play Areas (4)**

- Please do not add children's playgrounds. I am an early childhood teacher/administrator of many years and welcome wonderful play areas for children. However, the size and shape of this park is not suitable for a children's playground and would be a disservice to both the children and other users of the park.
- The children's play area needs to be improved and the drainage in that block fixed.
- Add an ADULT playground, with a LONG set of RINGS, some chin-up bars, possible obstacle course, a fun web to climb, etc. It would be SUPER POPULAR :).
- Play spaces for kids.

### **Lighting (4)**

- Lighting improved.
- More lighting.
- Artistically improve the lighting (currently too bright and focused on roadway, while buildings and artwork dark).
- Up lighting in the gardens to make use of the plants and the tree canopies.

### **Benches / Seating (3)**

- Replace the benches. They seem to be very old. Put a spacing between so that no one can lie down on the benches. Have seen that work in the city I use to live in and more people willing to sit and enjoy the scenery.
- Benches that discourage sleeping could help those who are uncomfortable with the homeless. An additional loo would be good -- perhaps further north.
- I would like to see missing benches replaced.

### **PSU / University District (3)**

- The PSU area needs significant improvement. The hardscape areas are old and do not meet ADA in many cases. The benches need to be replaced in many areas and the whole design is tired. This is not a historic area and needs to evolve to meet the needs of PSU and the broader public, including more open space with less trees and more turf for flexible use and better access to sun.
- PSU is currently working on a circulation plan for campus and we would like to sync our plans to make sure there is cohesion and agreement on the future of the park blocks between the plans.
- Keep PSU market here. Keep it accessible to all.

### **Quiet Space (3)**

- I don't think covered shelter is a good idea at all or children's play equipment, pickup games or exercise equipment. I think it should be used as a quiet respite for sitting, walking & reflecting - growing cities need places of quiet and reflection.
- I suppose I am being selfish, but I see no need to make the park blocks more than a quiet respite in our city. We don't need more crowds or boisterous activity.
- There is something about having this quiet, beautiful accessible series of garden blocks that provide shade and silence and comfort.

### **Restrooms / Portland Loo (2)**

- Public restrooms should be a right for all urban dwellers, and Portland Parks & Rec has a responsibility to provide adequate access to facilities.
- The Portland Loo should not have been located on the main path through the SPBs. It should have been located off to the side. The day residents/homeless settle around the Loo in groups.

# Feedback from Community Event

Approximately 150 people participated in the “Party in the Park” community event on July 17, 2019, held in the South Park Blocks. Participants learned about the project, park history and conditions, discussed questions with project staff and were encouraged to complete a comment survey. Interactive display boards asked people to share their perspectives on park improvements.

## Which features would you like to see more of in the park?

Feature	Dots
Native plants & habitat	31
Cultural performances	23
Diverse public art	22
Live music	21
Movies	19
Rain gardens	19
Community events	18
Resting places	12
Picnic areas	12
Community gardens	11
Fitness equipment	9
Children's play areas	8
Covered areas	7
Paved paths	6
Informal pick-up sports	6
Ceremony spaces	5
Open fields	4

## What additional features would you like to see in the park?

Feature	Dots
Dog park	6
Adult-sized playground	5
"No scooters" signs	4
Dog-free area	3
Using leaves as resources to build soil	3
Lighting in seating areas and pathways	3
Limited equity cooperatives	3
Clean, attended restroom	2
Food carts	1
More permeable hardscape	1
Multi-generational games and play equipment	1
"Hamsterdam" for the homeless like on <i>the Wire</i>	1
Skateboard friendly surfaces/paths	1
More features for children	1
Skatepark	1

## **Additional Comments from Community Event**

### **Cultural District Map Comments**

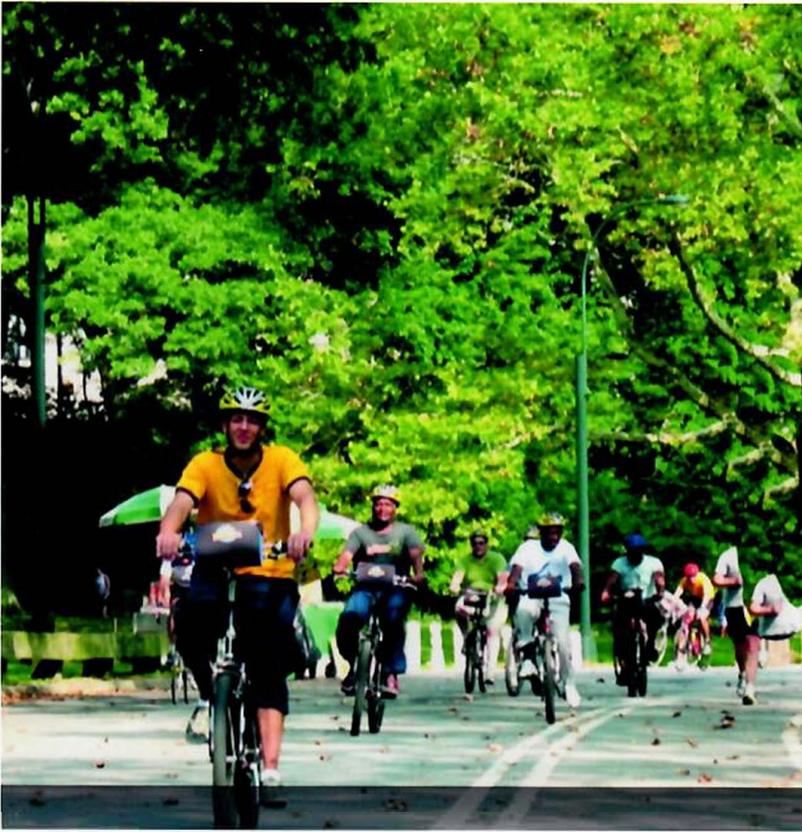
- Keep “Historical Character” of park
- The elms, open spaces, safety
- Address the homeless situation. Health issue even. (It is becoming more of an issue)
- Do something with cement sculpture so kids don’t use as skateboard ramp
- I want it to remain beautiful and green with no buildings
- More areas for children to play and a few picnic tables
- Clean park benches
- Improve by making more clean and create a dog park!
- Light poles -- clean & repair
- Less smoking enforcement
- More trash enforcement
- Better enforcement of park rules
- Make it more family friendly
- Planting, mix trees are very important, as are the rose garden, sculptures, grass
- Larger presence of rangers and police to keep drugs (dealing, etc.) in check
- The art museum has owned this home for cars for 29+ years. Let’s insist it become a home for people instead. [refers to parking lot on Main and Park]
- Fabulous tree! May it live another 100 years! [refers to Farrell Sycamore]
- Fix the hole in the South Park Blocks – no more treeless asphalt deserts on the best site of housing in the City [refers to parking lot on Main and Park]

### **University District Map Comments**

- Green Zebra grocery here [to the east]
- Fabulous free noon music at PSU
- Keep the trees!! (whole park)
- Farmer’s Market!! :)
- Food carts favorite feature
- The trees and greenery
- Keep skateboards out – they’re dangerous

## **Written Statements**

The following written statements were submitted as comments at the community event on July 17, 2019. These two statements were signed by the authors and are included in this report with their permission.



## **BIKE CURIOUS.**

(IT'S TRIVIA TIME.)

### **QUESTION 12:**

**Which NYC Mayor  
instituted car-free hours  
Central Park in the  
mid-1960s?**

**A. John V. Lindsay**

July 14, 2019

My idea for the park is two-fold. The first part is to seasonally close the park blocks to traffic during the hours on Wednesday which is typical for the Market. And also perhaps add an additional day for the Market, like Friday.

After the streets are closed, the Market will be able to expand in scope in a similar way to the Saturday Market at PSU, with the stalls on the interior of the park streets, and the rest of the street, including parking spaces to be used for walkways and bicycle and scooter use in a more protected environment away from cars. I would also work on getting Powell's to add into the mix a portable pop-up location for those days when the Market is underway.

I would arrange a presence in the park by the institutions which border it, perhaps a lunch-time concert or free hours in the Historical Society or Art Museum. Use the extensive experience of the PSU Market to guide this expansion, which from recent experience seems quite necessary.

Sincerely,  
Rand Russell

## Vision for Housing Justice – DOWNTOWN!

Where there is no vision, there is no hope.

*George Washington Carver*

I have long railed against what I call [Downtown Portland's Treeless Asphalt Deserts](#). Besides their daily assault on the health and well-being of downtown residents, try walking past a series of them on SW 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue or SW Main Street when it's 105 degrees and smoky. Encouraged by my Portland State University Site Design class instructor, I re-designed one of these deserts: 935 SW Main Street—the 25,000 square foot surface parking lot **owned by Portland Art Museum for the last 29+ years**. I see this proposal as one exemplary step towards solving our housing crisis in a systemic way.

Here's our vision (written as the developer) . . .

The mixed income Etta Cooperative will be in a multi-story, multi-level building owned by the residents as a limited equity cooperative. The land will be held in trust by a community land trust, a 50-year old model for a new system of land tenure that takes land off of the private, commodity, speculative market and puts it into trust. The CLT issues 99-year leases to buildings on that land—buildings that can be privately or cooperatively owned—or rented.

It is named after Henrietta (Etta) Eliot who supported her husband (first minister of First Unitarian Church, Thomas Lamb Eliot) in the many social causes he championed for the poor and disenfranchised. They raised eight children on the site and their legacy still lives in the activist Church one can see from the site. The site's history—including its Native American history—will be celebrated throughout.



Since the cost of the land will be separated from the cost of the housing, shares in the units can be purchased at a very reasonable

price--all the more remarkable because the Etta will sit on what is arguably the best residential site in Portland with its cultural, educational, park and transportation amenities. We'll reach out to the many people of color organizations we support to generate participation from those populations. Through impact investing sites and media, we'll seek to reach wealthy and middle class folks who want to put their bodies where their hearts are—by living in a racially diverse mixed-income community that demonstrates climate justice.

The land will be purchased from the Art Museum by a Portland philanthropist—akin to Sam Gary who founded Denver's Urban Land Conservancy with a \$15 million donation in 2003. **We are now looking for that person.**

All Etta Cooperative's power needs will be supplied by the renewably sourced district energy/combined heat and power plant Apple will build as part of its development to the immediate west of the Etta. Since we won't need our own boilers or chillers we'll have more space for our common areas and community center—and those will be open to the neighborhood. And we'll have more money to use other resource-conserving technologies—e.g, triple-paned windows, superinsulation and a bioreactor to treat toilet and greywater for reuse.

Our green roofs will provide garden spaces for residents—who will be encouraged to garden on their balconies too. Native trees, shrubs, vines and wildflowers within the site will create a haven for humans and pollinators. Those spaces will also help teach children about nature and add to the ambience of the Green Loop at our front door.

By being a highly visible model in downtown Portland, our vision for an Etta Cooperative will help to educate people—both Portlanders and visitors—that we are not stuck with the housing system we have. As we watch the current system leave more and more people on the street, a system that treats housing as a social good will inspire others to mimic it. Contact us to schedule a slide show or otherwise help with Etta's progress.

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We'd be remiss if we didn't mention our precursor: the Proud Ground (community land trust)/Habitat for Humanity [5020 N Interstate project](#). This proposed six-story, 64-unit development has been advertising 2-3 bedroom condominiums from \$121,000—\$274,500 for qualified applicants. Market rate units will be available as well. It just passed Design Review.



*Mary Vogel, through her WBE, PlanGreen, works on issues of climate justice, especially housing and green infrastructure. She has promoted the CLT model since 1978. She can be reached at [mary\(at\)plangreen\(.\)net](mailto:mary(at)plangreen(.)net).*