



PORLAND PARKS & RECREATION<sup>SM</sup>

Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland

# South Park Blocks Master Plan

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Draft Preferred Design  
Community Comment Report

November 2020



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## South Park Blocks Master Plan Project

[www.portlandoregon.gov/parks/spb](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/parks/spb)

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# Introduction

Portland Parks & Recreation is working with the community to develop a plan for a South Park Blocks that is safe, accessible and welcoming for all Portlanders. The plan will address key challenges and opportunities, including maintaining a healthy tree canopy, making the park more accessible for all users, retaining park character while enhancing connections, and providing space for community events.

Portland Parks & Recreation began the South Parks Block planning process by convening a community advisory committee to guide the project and launching a community visioning process in Summer 2019 to inform the development of three draft design concepts. The draft concepts were shared with the community in Fall 2019. The feedback on the design concepts guided the development of a draft preferred design.

The community engagement approach for this stage of the project was designed to:

- Enlist community participation in the design review process with a special focus on PSU students, the Native American Community Advisory Council and Parks Accessibility Advisory Committee;
- Explain how community feedback and ideas heard during the draft concept phase influenced the development of Draft Preferred Design;
- Gather and understand community feedback on the Draft Preferred Design to develop a preferred park design; and,
- Strengthen community relationships and build support for the South Park Blocks and PP&R.

This third stage of engagement included two meetings of the Community Advisory Committee, discussions with stakeholder groups and organizations, a focus group with PSU students, consultations with the Parks Accessibility Advisory Committee and monthly briefings for the Native American Community Advisory Council. Briefings were provided for a joint meeting of the Design and Historic Landmarks Commissions, the Urban Forestry Commission, Portland's Centers for the Arts, PSU Campus and Facility Planning Staff, Portland Business Alliance, and the First Congregational United Church of Christ.

An online open house for the draft preferred design was held in June 2020. This open house was available in English and Spanish and gave community members the opportunity to review the draft preferred design and provide feedback through a survey. The open house was viewed 1,050 times and the survey received 220 responses. This report provides survey respondent demographic data and their responses to the survey.

# Survey Respondent Demographics

## Where do you live?

| Answer Choice                      | Percentage | Responses |
|------------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Northwest Portland                 | 8.42%      | 17        |
| Southwest Portland                 | 34.65%     | 70        |
| North Portland                     | 9.41%      | 19        |
| Northeast Portland                 | 11.88%     | 24        |
| Southeast Portland                 | 20.79%     | 42        |
| East Portland                      | 2.48%      | 5         |
| Portland Metropolitan Area         | 6.93%      | 14        |
| Outside Portland Metropolitan Area | 2.48%      | 5         |
| Prefer Not to Answer               | 2.97%      | 6         |

## What year were you born?

| Answer Choice        | Percentage | Responses |
|----------------------|------------|-----------|
| After 2000           | 0.0%       | 0         |
| 1990-1999            | 8.59%      | 17        |
| 1980-1989            | 25.25%     | 50        |
| 1970-1979            | 12.12%     | 24        |
| 1960-1969            | 15.15%     | 30        |
| 1950-1959            | 14.65%     | 29        |
| 1940-1949            | 16.67%     | 33        |
| Before 1940          | 3.03%      | 6         |
| Prefer not to answer | 4.55%      | 9         |

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

| Answer Choice                       | Percentage | Responses |
|-------------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| American Indian or Alaska Native    | 0.98%      | 2         |
| Asian or Asian American             | 1.96%      | 4         |
| Black or African American           | 1.47%      | 3         |
| Hispanic or Latino/A/X              | 2.45%      | 5         |
| Middle Eastern/North African        | 0.98%      | 2         |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | 0.98%      | 2         |
| White                               | 77.45%     | 158       |
| Unknown/Don't Know                  | 0.49%      | 1         |
| Prefer not to answer                | 14.22%     | 29        |
| Not listed above (please specify)   | 4.9%       | 10        |

\*Responses to "not listed above": Russian (born and immigrated to the US); forcing an answer helps with stats but not participation; Norwegian; Norwegian American; German American; Slavic; immigrant; Slavic; Irish American; Human Race

### How do you identify your gender?

| Answer Choice                     | Percentage | Responses |
|-----------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Female                            | 41.41%     | 82        |
| Male                              | 42.93%     | 85        |
| Transmasculine                    | 0.51%      | 1         |
| Transfeminine                     | 0.51%      | 1         |
| Genderqueer/Androgynous           | 2.53%      | 5         |
| Prefer not to answer              | 11.11%     | 22        |
| Not listed above (please specify) | 2.02%      | 4         |

\*Responses to "not listed above": forcing an answer helps with stats but not participation; nonbinary; Non-Binary; I don't "identify" anything. My SEX is female. Gender is a [...] collection of stereotypes.

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

| Answer Choice | Percentage | Responses |
|---------------|------------|-----------|
| Yes           | 24.12%     | 48        |
| No            | 75.88%     | 151       |

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

| Answer Choice   | Percentage | Responses |
|---|------------|-----------|
| Mobility (e.g., walking, climbing stairs)                               | 32.2%      | 19        |
| Visual (e.g., blind, low vision)  | 6.78%      | 4         |
| Deaf or hard-of-hearing   | 6.78%      | 4         |
| Cognitive (e.g., traumatic brain injury, learning disability)           | 13.56%     | 8         |
| Mental Health (e.g., anxiety, PTSD)                                     | 28.81%     | 17        |
| Intellectual or developmental (e.g., Down syndrome, fragile X syndrome) | 3.39%      | 2         |
| Invisible (e.g., diabetes, HIV, cancer)                                 | 15.25%     | 9         |
| Prefer not to disclose  | 23.73%     | 14        |
| Prefer to describe  | 6.78%      | 4         |

\* Responses to "prefer to describe": forcing an answer helps with stats but not participation; Neurological/mobility; cerebral palsy; Nowhere to put this comment - I own 1 rental property along the park blocks. My son lived in the condo for 7 years, I may end up moving there in a couple more years. I consider this my neighborhood although I don't live there currently.

# Focus Groups – What We Heard

Survey respondents tend to be predominantly White and from higher income groups with resources that support a higher level of involvement in planning processes than other communities who experience competing priorities and barriers to participation. Focus groups are important for providing opportunities to have deeper conversations with groups we hear from less frequently. In addition to the survey, the focus group with students at Portland State University was reconvened and a focused meeting with members of the Native American Community Advisory Council was held over the Zoom meeting interface.

## Major themes from the PSU Focus Group

- The Draft Preferred Design has worked towards incorporating a lot of different ideas and seems like a good compromise;
- Like the addition of evergreen trees – important for stormwater management;
- Concerned about anti-skate design elements as skateboarding is a legitimate and more affordable form of transportation for many;
- Please continue to work towards making more inclusive spaces, important to make sure that everyone feels welcome;
- Favor for representing more diversity in cultures and identities, the historic presentation opposition seems like coded language;
- Work at telling more diverse stories through visuals that are reminder of roots of Portland – great for visitors;
- Like the idea of bringing art into the park – look at San Francisco MOMA who provides art in public spaces that can be viewed without paying an entrance fee;
- Please engage non-white artists for new work – the Portland Bureau of Transportation is working on a Black Street Art Request for Proposals that could be a good model;
- Temporary canopy seems like it might be too labor intensive or costly; and,
- Interest in continuing to be involved in transportation decisions around the Green Loop and crossing treatments.

## Major themes from Native American Community Advisor Listening Check-in

- Concern over the historic focus on settler culture and the European-influenced park design resulting in an erasure of Native American history and culture;
- Disappointment about the number of elms proposed to be replanted with a concern a monoculture is being created – evergreen and native trees as well as species diversity provide more habitat value and resiliency;
- Emphasis that the Roosevelt and Lincoln statues should be reconsidered; would be great to have a Native sculpture, something by a Black artist, and/or rotating temporary art instead; and,
- Negative impression from lines of trees along central promenade, consider planting native understory to soften those lines and provide a more productive and restorative landscape.

# Survey Results – What We Heard

## Key Findings

- Most respondents expressed favor for all proposed new features in the University District with relatively lower levels of favorability for the removable canopy at the Smith Amphitheater Plaza renovation and the Green Loop crossing at Block 2.
- Most respondents expressed favor for proposed new features in the Cultural District with relatively lower levels of favorability for new social seating types at Blocks 7 and 8.
- Most respondents expressed favor for the Tree Succession Strategy approaches in the University District with some disfavor expressed for replanting elm trees or comparable species in central rows.
- Most respondents expressed favor for maintaining the overlapping tree canopy in the Cultural District and providing increased space for two rows of elms to become healthier and more resilient but notable disfavor for not replanting the central row of trees over time to support this increased space.
- Significant support was expressed for proposed safety improvements related to transportation, inclusive design, clearer visibility, and opportunities for activated spaces throughout the day.
- Concerns about the Draft Preferred Design expressed most frequently focused on:
  - The creation of an overly busy, cluttered space;
  - The addition of too much hardscape and activity with a loss of quiet, green space; and,
  - Conflicts with the historic park design and reduction of elm trees over time.
- Many contrasting views were expressed related to the Green Loop, bicycles, and cars:
  - Support for the Green Loop and improving bicycle accessibility along the park blocks and contrasting concerns about bicycles and the Green Loop negatively impacting the experiences of park users.
  - Disappointment that there are not more car-free areas proposed with contrasting concerns about the reduction in car access, loading, and parking.
- Many comments were expressed related to the need to reconsider the relevance and appropriateness of the Roosevelt and Lincoln statues.

**1. Please tell us what you think about the key features of the Draft Preferred Design in the University District:**

■ Strongly/Somewhat Like    ■ Strongly/Somewhat Dislike    ■ Don't Know/No Opinion

Addition of native planting areas at Blocks 1 and 5



New play experience and gathering area at Block 1



Space for rotating exhibits for new and permanent art at Block 6



New flexible gathering plaza at Block 2



Shared Use Path for the Green Loop through Block 2 and west of the park



Renovation of Smith Amphitheater Plaza and removable canopy at Block 4



■ Strongly Like    ■ Somewhat Like    ■ Somewhat Dislike    ■ Strongly Dislike    ■ Don't Know/No Opinion

Addition of native planting areas at Blocks 1 and 5



New play experience and gathering area at Block 1



Space for rotating exhibits for new and permanent art at Block 6



New flexible gathering plaza at Block 2



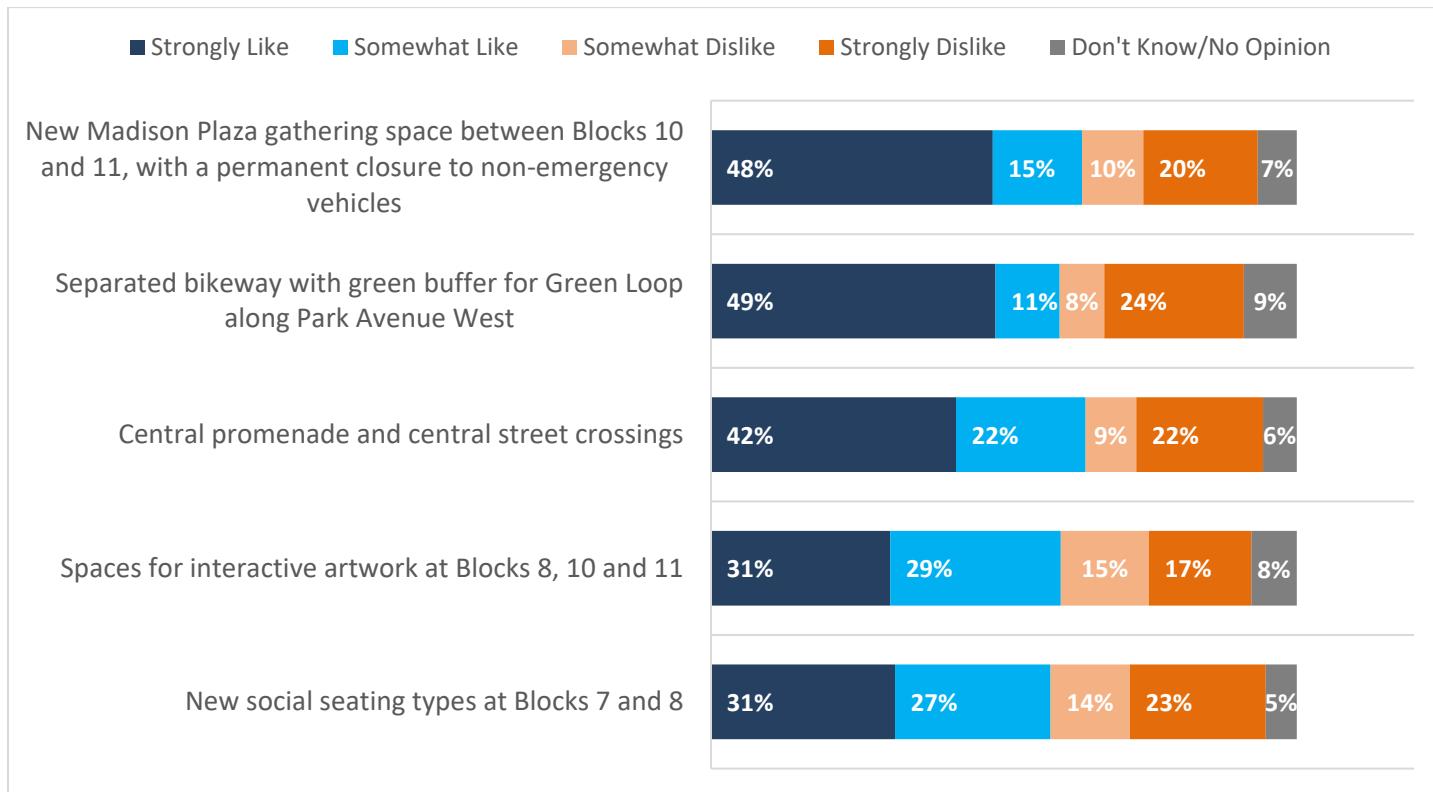
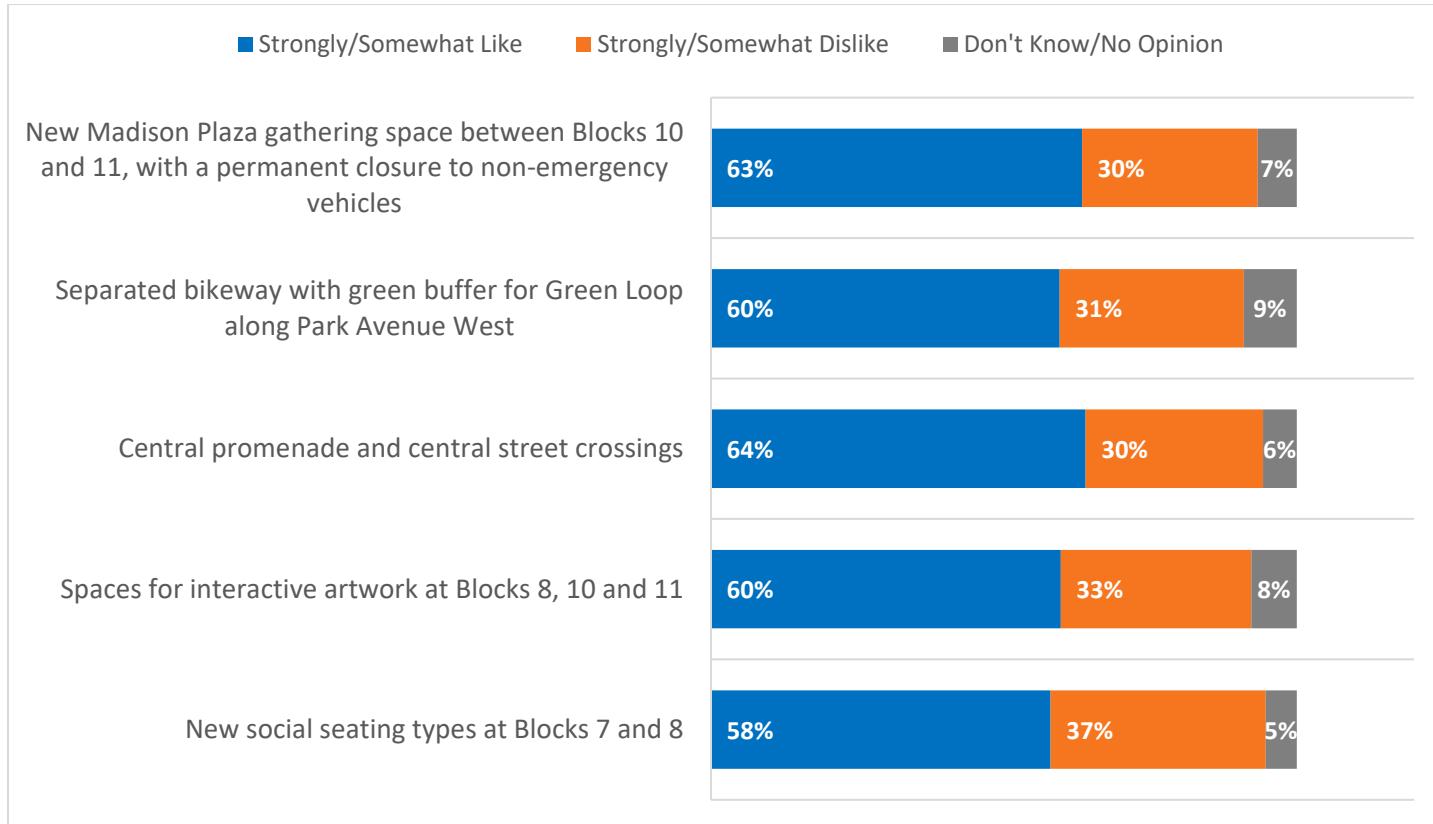
Shared Use Path for the Green Loop through Block 2 and west of the park



Renovation of Smith Amphitheater Plaza and removable canopy at Block 4



## 2. Please tell us what you think about the key features of the Draft Preferred Design in the Cultural District:



## 2. What do you think of the following approaches to the Tree Succession Strategy in the University District?

■ Strongly/Somewhat Like    ■ Strongly/Somewhat Dislike    ■ Don't Know/No Opinion

Tree canopies will overlap at their edges to provide shade and enclosure similar to the current experience in the park.



A variety of compatible deciduous trees (medium and large) are added to maintain the visual presence of planted rows and increase the resiliency of the tree canopy.

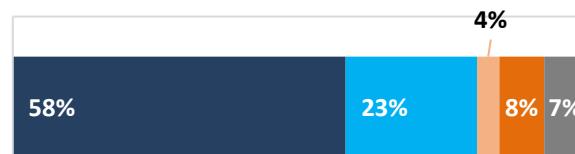


Elm trees or comparable species are present in a central row of plantings with breaks for pathways and plazas.

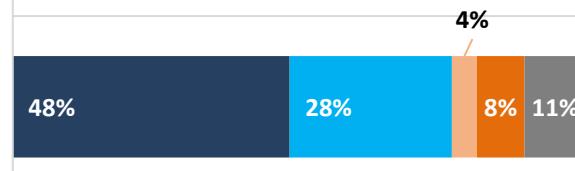


■ Strongly Like    ■ Somewhat Like    ■ Somewhat Dislike    ■ Strongly Dislike    ■ Don't Know/No Opinion

Tree canopies will overlap at their edges to provide shade and enclosure similar to the current experience in the park.



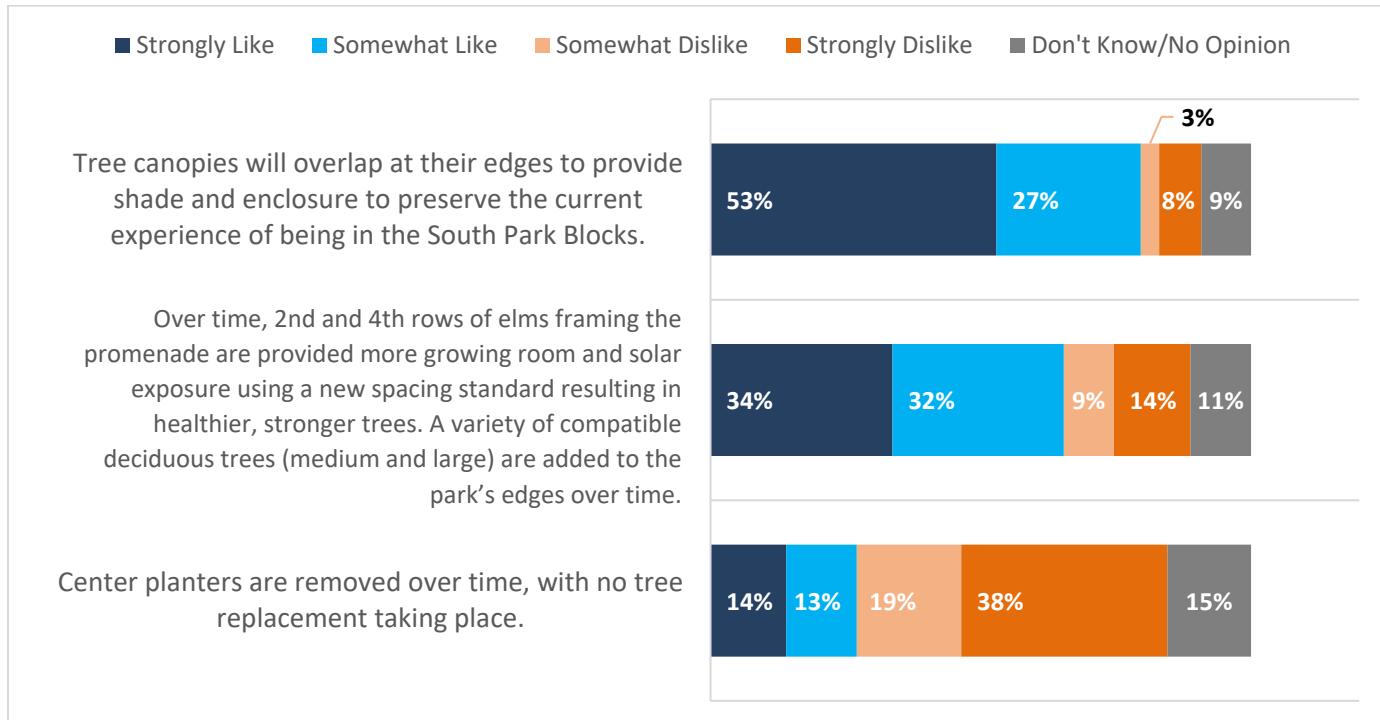
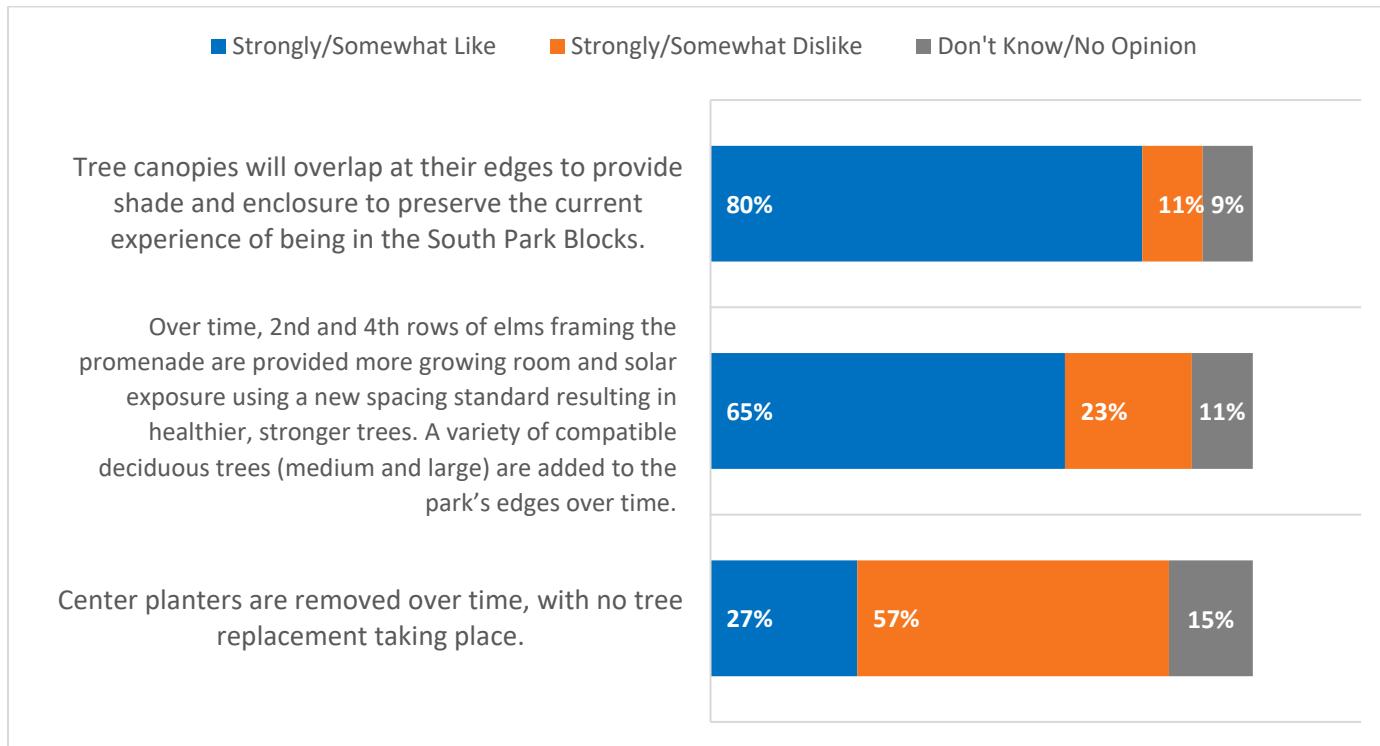
A variety of compatible deciduous trees (medium and large) are added to maintain the visual presence of planted rows and increase the resiliency of the tree canopy.



Elm trees or comparable species are present in a central row of plantings with breaks for pathways and plazas.



#### 4. What do you think of the following approaches to the Tree Succession Strategy in the Cultural District?



**3. The plan recommends several safety improvements throughout the park. Do you support these safety improvements?**

■ Strongly/Somewhat Support ■ Strongly/Somewhat Oppose ■ Don't Know/No Opinion

Recommendation to PBOT to continue to study the safest crossing treatments and signal improvements



Improved surfacing and inclusive design of new park features to increase accessibility



Centralized crossings in the Cultural District and raised median islands where appropriate to make crossings safer and shorten pedestrian crossing distances



Separated bike lane for the Green Loop along Park Avenue West in the Cultural District



Clearer visibility to provide park users a higher perception of safety and awareness of their surroundings



More opportunities for activated spaces throughout the day



■ Strongly Support ■ Somewhat Support ■ Somewhat Oppose ■ Strongly Oppose ■ Don't Know/No Opinion

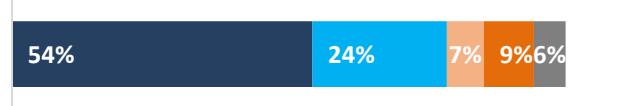
Recommendation to PBOT to continue to study the safest crossing treatments and signal improvements



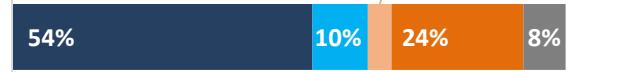
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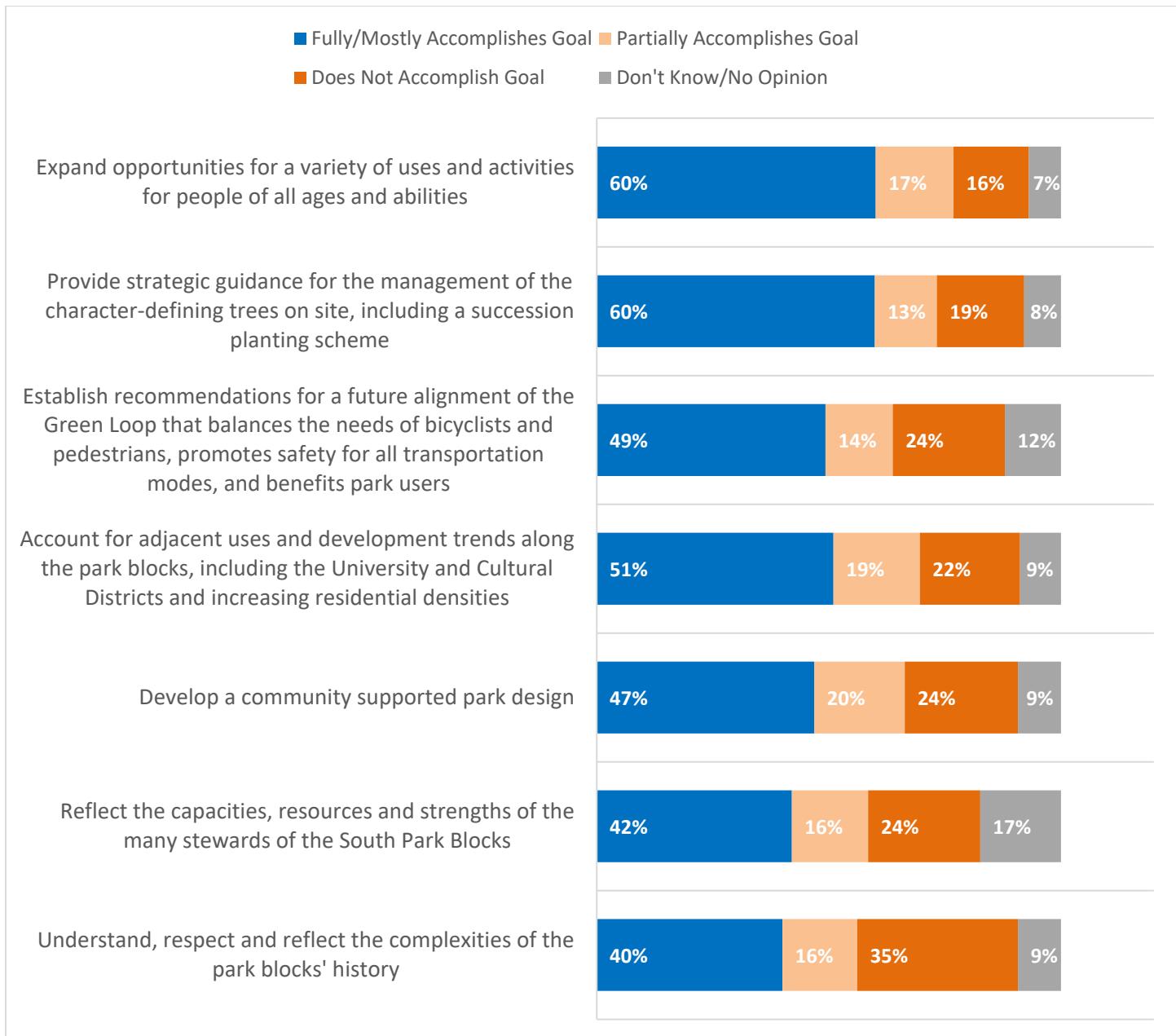
Clearer visibility to provide park users a higher perception of safety and awareness of their surroundings



More opportunities for activated spaces throughout the day



**4. How well do you think the Draft Preferred Design for the South Park Blocks accomplishes each of the project goals, as defined below?**



■ Fully Accomplishes Goal ■ Mostly Accomplishes Goal ■ Partially Accomplishes Goal

■ Does Not Accomplish Goal ■ Don't Know/No Opinion

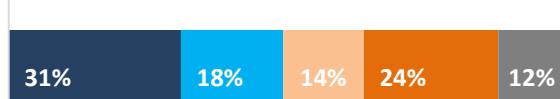
Expand opportunities for a variety of uses and activities for people of all ages and abilities



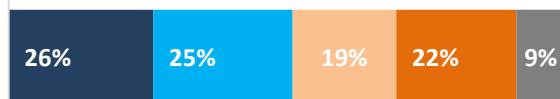
Provide strategic guidance for the management of the character-defining trees on site, including a succession planting scheme



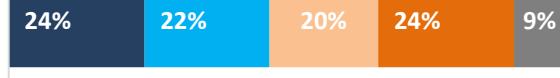
Establish recommendations for a future alignment of the Green Loop that balances the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians, promotes safety for all transportation modes, and benefits park users



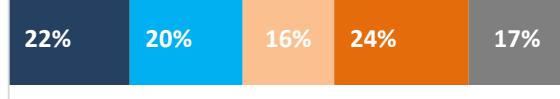
Account for adjacent uses and development trends along the park blocks, including the University and Cultural Districts and increasing residential densities



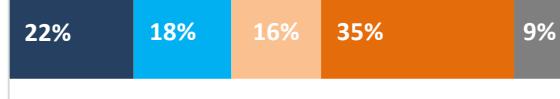
Develop a community supported park design



Reflect the capacities, resources and strengths of the many stewards of the South Park Blocks



Understand, respect and reflect the complexities of the park blocks' history



## **7. Do you have any other comments, or anything else you want to tell us?**

*This question gave participants the opportunity for open-ended responses. The responses (179 total) 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.*

### **Q7 Response Themes**

#### **1. Overall Assessment of Draft Design**

- Block 1
- Block 2 and 3
- Block 4
- Block 5-9
- Block 10 and 11
- Block 12

#### **2. Park Character / Green Space (27)**

#### **3. Bicycles (23)**

#### **4. Historic Preservation and Nomination (23)**

#### **5. Pedestrian Safety / Street Crossings (21)**

#### **6. City Funding Priorities (18)**

#### **7. Community Engagement and Comment Survey (17)**

#### **8. Green Loop (16)**

#### **9. Cars on Park Avenue (16)**

#### **10. Tree Canopy and Tree Succession Plan (15)**

#### **11. No changes (15)**

#### **12. Seating (14)**

#### **13. Plantings (14)**

#### **14. Trees (13)**

#### **15. Central Promenade (13)**

#### **16. Vehicle Traffic and Parking (12)**

#### **17. Maintenance and Security (10)**

#### **18. Parking (9)**

#### **19. Statues (9)**

#### **20. Art (9)**

#### **21. Homeless / Houseless Community (8)**

#### **22. Lawn and Grass (7)**

#### **23. Restrooms / Portland Loo (4)**

#### **24. Dogs (4)**

#### **25. Skateboards (3)**

#### **26. Questions**

#### **27. Other / General**

## Overall Assessment of Draft Design

- I can't wait to see the final result.
- Essential to retain open space for Farmers Market.
- I would also like to see treatments to deal with stormwater runoff.
- Please integrate Central City wayfinding into this project (bike/ped)
- Keep it simple!!!
- Don't encourage a lot of events.
- I think this looks great.
- There's a lot in this Master Plan to be excited about, and I am grateful for the clear attention and thought that's been put into making these public spaces vibrant, accessible, and beautiful.
- Otherwise, great job.
- I support the masterplan
- I have worked on the park blocks since 1973. I really like what this plan is hoping to accomplish. It is a fresh, modern look that adds a great diversity to the look and appeal of the space. I look forward to seeing it take shape.
- Excellent assessment and proposed transformation of the urban fabric, community users and long-term growth of Portland's downtown!
- Plan should reflect connections to currently proposed developments along the park blocks such as PAM.
- Unify park blocks rather than divide them- this plan makes it look like two different parks rather than one - because of way north end was reconfigured with central path. Don't like.
- Creates two separate parks rather than unifying all 12 blocks
- The South Park Master Plan calls for the addition of many new features that will clutter the open spaces do not clutter the park.
- Clutters the restrained design, over programs it
- Does little to accommodate different ethnic interests (ie., Asian and African Americans).
- This proposal looks great overall, though. Great job balancing upgrades with preservation of the current feel and historic nature of the park blocks.
- Overall - a great plan. I can tell a tremendous amount of thought has been put into this plan!
- On the positive, larger gathering spaces, separated bike paths, closing of some streets, more art are all great.
- Thank you for these ideas.
- I looked at your plan and was impressed! I feel like the future of the South Park Blocks is in good hands! Thank you for your hard work and your caring!
- Great initiative overall.
- Thanks for putting the plan out and I am sure I won't be around to see the new trees fill in but I'm glad it's being planned.
- I live in the Park Blocks and am delighted about the possibility of these plans coming to fruition.
- Generally, I think the design incorporates many of the ideas voiced by people over the course of the planning process. Thank you!
- Accessibility and universal design are key.
- Very ambitious. In terms of wayfinding, including more options for blind and low vision folks would be useful, perhaps with interactive kiosks at various locations that include visual and auditory information
- Some of the ideas are great but some of the ideas are really awful and expensive.
- I am very disappointed with this plan.
- Overall fairly disappointed in many aspects of the plan.

- I'm very disappointed in the plan. The new structures are a bad idea, keep the open space and the historic character of the park. Keep the rose planters! Rose City! Don't add a lot of hard pavement, keep the plantings.
- This is a plan for a plans sake. It is not reflective of current or hoped for park use. This is a neighborhood park!!
- This is such an incredibly disappointing plan. Please throw it out.
- This plan dismantles the park, block by block, when the goal should be to unify the park, and make it cohesive, with long visual sight-lines, the "allée" of 5 rows of deciduous trees (preferably Elms). Fragmenting it will lead to piecemeal destruction, block by block. You only have a "whole park" once.
- This proposal destroys the serenity of a park designed by Olmstead. The proposed plan is amateurish.
- The Park Blocks are beautiful. Yes, repave them for wheelchair users and maybe add some art if you want, but do not remove the elms and do not add those ugly "new Portland" art features that make everything look like the Pearl District. This plan is so out of touch it hurts.
- There is WAY too much proposed in these plans. The urban design elements are all good, but it's not a smart approach to shove every trendy tactical urban element in a few blocks. The area doesn't feel cohesive and there's no common thread running through the blocks. Pare it down to a few elements. I don't know enough about trees and urban forestry to have a say on the plantings. This is a crappy way to get feedback-you bombarded a reader with too many planning elements
- The Master Plan does not clearly convey what's being impacted, in terms of tree succession plan, changes to walkway systems (2 narrow walkways vs single wider one), addition of communal tables/seating, "temporary" canopy additions, pedestrian-bike interactions/safety, etc.
- This is a fun project for designers, but the results are overdone. Simple beats complex. Keep the design simple, as it has been. Don't let a desire to create more stuff take over. That appears to have been the result.
- Creating additional public space for events is a double-edged sword - if they're being used and the space is activated, it's great. The minute those spaces aren't used, they become a vacuum and houseless folks come in to sleep on the social seating.
- This plan is an urban planners dreamscape but covid 19 just reminded everyone the benefits of living outside the urban core.
- With covid19 the designs do not take being spaced apart into account.
- Part of Portland's appeal is its adherence to vintage beauty. We do not need hi-tech looking remodels that detract from that! Some of the recommended changes are ok, but I do not support complete overhaul!!
- This design was far too cluttered.
- The plan does not address the underlying main needs of the Blocks before anything else can happen.
- Surely there's a better way to revitalize the Park Blocks than to make them look and feel like a tacky, ugly theme park.
- This is way too complicated. I have a master's of urban and regional planning from PSU and I can't follow it.
- I am also concerned with how all community members will interact within each blocksetting. Will the design attract and isolate people based on demographics/economic status?
- The additional hard surfaces proposed at each block is anti-ethical to the use of the South Park Blocks. There are plenty of other hard surface gathering places west of the park blocks on the PSU campus.
- **TOO MUCH PAVEMENT!!!** The greenness of the Park Blocks is necessarily jeopardized by the death of the elm trees. The creation of a wide promenade replacing the double paths worsens the problem. Greenery near the park blocks is likely going away. Specifically, the shrubs adjacent to block one just south of Shattuck School, along the former tennis courts are at risk. PSU should announce its plan for that block as part of this process.

Also, the trees on the east side of the block between Columbia and Clay are likely to come down when the promised affordable housing is built on the SE corner of Park and Columbia. None of those plants (neither the tennis court hedge nor the scrawny trees) are beautiful but they are likely to be replaced by concrete structure or pavement sometime soon. So each of the individual plaza ideas has some merit, the cumulative impact is negative. Closing Madison in front of the Art Museum is a great idea. Setting up that area as a venue with the overhead sculpture sounds good.

### **Block 1**

- More seating around the actual perimeter of the play area would be great. As a parent, I've found having seating in direct proximity to the play area allows me to stay nearby without directly hovering over my child. I'm always thankful for seating options like this!
- Is the giant playground necessary given the dearth of children in the neighborhood? There's not enough parking to bring in more kids and families anyway.
- The playground improvements at the north end. Don't make a playground out of the rest of the blocks.
- Children's active equipment near the Native American center should echo an indigenous long house. By style or layout. Could be an art/architectural climbing piece to incorporate, 1. round door in a square facing the river, 2. raised platforms as each segment of a lodge, 3. surfaces with reliefs of home artifacts, stretched skins, baskets.
- With the block 1 play area, keep in mind that the trees will drop leaves and other things onto the area, and we might want to keep it grass instead of turf.
- Block 1's design doesn't seem to reflect that it's right by a busy freeway - developing some sort of barrier would be nice. Additionally (this is totally anecdotal), I rarely see children using that playground. I'm not confident that doubling down on a play-oriented space is the approach that will provide the most benefit to the community.
- With the play area and seating, please ensure that it is universal and can be used by folks with disabilities.
- I suggest considering a dog park as part of Block One. PSU would likely maintain it at their cost (per the AVP for Planning, Construction & Real Estate at PSU) if PP&R created it.

### **Block 2 and 3**

- The viking pavilion is a terrible idea. We need the green space there for quiet study, and leisurely relaxing with friends. WE DO NOT WANT A LARGE GATHERING SPACE. That whole area is surrounded by classrooms, and it already gets too loud to be able to concentrate. Additionally, we've been under construction for years, and we're sick of it. By all means, add more pathways for accessibility but leave the area outside of Smith Memorial Student Union alone. It is not broken, and does not need to be fixed. Please please please DO NOT BUILD THAT PAVILION!!! I sincerely regret attending PSU, and if I weren't a year away from my MFA, I'd transfer to another school.
- Blocks 2, 3, 4 are not the private domain of Portland State University. Existing tree cover and green space should be maintained. Building additional PSU facilities at the cost of existing mature trees and park space is not community oriented. The "plaza" in block two is especially egregious. Removing tree cover and replacing it with a sere expanse just to make an antechamber to an athletic stadium is a disgrace.

### **Block 4**

- That removable tensile canopy will soon look dirty. It will not be a good addition. In fact, it will be a disturbing feature.
- Not sure about the large removable canopy for the Smith Amphitheater plaza and would like to see more specifics about improvements to that plaza to ensure accessibility. Smith plaza is currently riddled with

tripping hazards, elevation changes and poor visuals for walking through/using/sitting in the space.

- Will the canopy block the view from the balcony of Smith Hall?
- Tensil roof violates historic concept of open space without buildings.
- I work at Portland State in Smith Memorial Student Union--the department that oversees the events in the South Park Blocks--and I sit the Smith Advisory Board. I also work in Student Activities and Leadership Programs, which hosts Portland State's largest engagement event for the past 25 years with nearly 2000 people in attendance each Fall, and I supervise student organizations that utilize the Park Blocks for events and host the bi-weekly concert series each Fall and Spring weather pending. With this in mind, I have the following concerns about the University District.
  - I don't see that there is a stage at all anymore in Block 4. While a physical stage may not be necessary, maintaining the high-amp electrical connection is important, and the installation of additional ones could even be helpful for the flexibility of use in the block.
  - 2 - The large planned garden outside of Smith at Block 4 referred to as a "sloped planting bed" will have a significant impact on the size of our event because that is space that we currently use for tabling. The way that the blocks are set up does not allow for growth in either direction for us to make up for this loss of space, and we already have to turn away people who want to table. It is unclear whether the flexible event/plaza space will offset this loss of space. This will have budgetary impacts for our department as well. I would advocate for a smaller garden in this area.

### **Block 5**

- I like that there is a paved sidewalk included on the north end of Block 5, by the streetcar stop. The goat path that exists now clearly indicates a need for this.

### **Block 6**

- People often gather outside before a performance in Lincoln Hall. More seating or a gathering place on east side of Block 6.

### **Block 7**

- In the north half of Block 7, i.e. past the In the Shadow of the Elm pavement art installation, retain two central walkways and preserve trees by not paving a promenade segment here.
- I like the diagonal walkways on the south side of Block 7. I think they will do a great job of naturally guiding pedestrians directly to the crosswalks over Market street, on either side of the streetcar stop. It makes a lot of sense and seems like a logical transition from the straight-line promenade walkways of the cultural district to the more diagonal pathways of PSU.

### **Block 8**

- Block 8 - Neighborhood Block: RE: social seating, communal tables  
Built environments invite behaviors which aspire to be safe, inclusive, and community building. The design demonstrates that aim. I know that it will be a time period before any of this happens and design features re-evaluated then. So, I am just saying that all things staying the same, it is a tough call whether a design like this would become nice community gathering spot or a menacing hang-out for criminal activities. I have seen both in the park over the years and it is going to depend on direction of downtown Portland from this perilous point.

## **Block 9**

- Commenting on the photo example of a midblock crossing for Columbia and Jefferson, the two crossings should be speed tables with each tabletop at least 2 inches above street surface and as high as 6-inches (same as curbs) and tabletop width of 8 to 12 feet. Speed tables work fine for fire trucks and would vastly increase drivers stopping when pedestrians cross and make pedestrians taller as seen by drivers.

## **Block 10 and 11**

- Closure of SW Madison St would unify that end of park and allow for safer and better event flow.
- Yes, SW Main Street at Shemanski Square should be closed to vehicular traffic permanently to promote interconnection of the northern most park blocks and pedestrian safety.
- South of the Roosevelt statue, keep at least one of the two central raised flower planters or create one of similar dimensions.
- Displacement of rose beds in front of museum is a problem; they have been a welcome sight and rose growth in other areas of shaded park blocks may not be feasible.
- North of the Lincoln statute, shorten instead of removing the central planter as a means of providing more plaza space in front of Lincoln
- Please close Main St permanently. The constant opening and closing of it makes no sense. People deserve the space back.
- I especially love the ideas of the permanent street closure between the Schnitz and P5 and the place making structures are particularly wonderful.
- I support permanent closing of Main St.
- Block 10/11 shows Madison Street closed west of Park West - it MUST remain open to pedestrians and bikes. Like permanent closure of Main to vehicular traffic.
- I like the idea of an overhead sculpture in block 11 but hate to lose any of the existing rose bush plantings.
- I like the idea of connecting the cultural district and closing Madison and Main streets to motor vehicles. I think it has the potential to really open the space up to some great programming.
- People first, designers second. I don't recall the term for space creating sense ideas, but people will use those areas without pointless lighting and sculptures overhead. Oh, yes: Those overhead sculptures. No, no, no. Again, it is for people, not designers.
- Block 10 & 11: Roosevelt Square and Lincoln Square: I'm excited to see a magnificent, interactive sculpture that really accomplishes place-making, and especially one that reflects diverse cultural histories and identities. Grandly, I hope it establishes the park blocks as more of an iconic city park to not only visit but to spend time and recreate, leisurely or otherwise.
- The block 10 and 11 mixed plantings in the center planting areas that are now present are the best features of the park today. They provide a modicum of habitat for non human creatures and provide a nice view for the people sitting on the benches. Without these areas I would not be spending any time in the park. These center planting areas should be preserved and new areas created. It's unclear whether the plan eliminates these areas. If it does, then I strongly oppose this aspect of the plan.

## **Block 12**

- I support and encourage consolidating the divided central pedestrian crossing of Main Street (between Blocks 11 & 12) into one. The two existing cuts through the median island make no sense. Within Block 12, shorten or shrink instead of removing the central planter south of the existing plaza.

## Park Character / Green Space (27)

- As much green and calm as possible.
- I am against adding concrete and removing green space and trees in the center of this city, which otherwise provides little respite for people to breathe and rest.
- The park blocks are a quiet, green line through the center of a downtown district. We do not need shopping mall style 'arty' seating areas and rotating sculptures, we need green and quiet.
- Portland of all places should welcome nature and human planted green spaces with as little pavement as possible. I use these parks several times each week for contact with nature and for shady, cool walking, public communing, restorative quiet in the middle of the busy city, where I don't have to wear sunblock. For people who want bright, sunny, open public spaces, we have an even larger waterfront
- Downtown walkers and retreat-seekers need these parks preserved with the priorities we are currently enjoying. We downtown dwellers need our natural beauty and quiet without having to drive to the state parks.
- Plan as presented replaces trees and plantings with concrete. Changes character of a park which is a retreat from the hassles of city life. Adds more paved surfaces with wide central promenade by removing the central planted beds and separated walkways which offer relief from congestion. Is the goal to make the Park Blocks, especially those in the Cultural District, less of a buffer for quiet and enjoyment of nature? Benches and pathways are now rarely busy. Why add more ?
- Keep the historic nature and open space.
- Honestly, I mainly want a green park space to walk in quietly because I live in an apartment with no green space.
- Also, it appears there is only one block designated for more quiet space, and currently the Park Blocks are the main quiet green space downtown, so I would want to see some of that peaceful aspect maintained--e.g., a place a downtown resident can go read a book on a bench.
- This is critical green space for residents downtown
- Keep the historic promenade nature of the park.
- Too much concrete and hard surfaces will make us loose a cool oasis in summer.
- This is a great shady place to walk.
- Shouldn't we be keeping as much greenspace as possible to offset the fact that Portland is a heat island and to offset air pollution? We are surrounded by freeway so every little bit helps in terms of air quality.
- I have lived on the park blocks for 26 years, and the most important things to me are the tree canopy, access to PSU and the cultural district, and a relative lack of traffic.
- Most of everything the city is proposing would degrade the experience of the park as a haven from concrete and commerce,
- Do not add structures. Keep the flexible open space.
- Green, quiet open space is what the park always has been and should continue to be.
- Aside from the children's park at PSU, my greatest desire is for this to remain a primarily passive park environment. Residents love having a quiet green space to unwind, sit, read, think, and calm themselves. Especially these days when we live with flash bangs. Helicopters, and protesters. Do not take our place outside where we calmly can sit under a tree and enjoy beautiful vegetation. A majority of us living in downtown can only take a green respite here.
- The SPB are unique in the USA and are a very important part of Portland's design history. Current use is flexible, the central parallel pedestrian pathways provide safety.
- I attended PSU for four years (back when it was PSC). I worked nearby for 40 years. I lived in an apartment on the South Park Blocks near PSU for a year or so. I have a long and strong sense of the beauty of the

blocks, of their usefulness, of the wisdom of Portlanders decade ago in preserving them. Again, keep them simple.

- If anything, we need more green spaces than fewer. The park is beautiful as is and enjoys tremendous use currently.
- Why does Parks & Rec want to waste our money turning one of downtown Portland's few peaceful, non-commercial spaces into yet another hardscape with tree highlights? Increased density only intensifies the need for quiet greenspace in the center of the city. Please stop trying to make every public space a venue, in constant motion.
- The current narrower width pedestrian walkways separated by landscape are more conducive to slower pace and the quieter setting which has long been the strength of these blocks. This better supports the senior residents in this community and the students who study here.  
Having enjoyed the tranquility and relaxed pace of this area for walks, it holds its' own to the louder and busier spaces such as the waterfront, PSU plazas, Pioneer Square, Terry Schrunk park, and other similar places. The denser landscape and more pedestrian sized walkways is the greatest strength of the South Park Blocks.
- As currently designed, the SPBs provide a quiet, contemplative, greenspace for strolling, reading, and chatting of a sort that very few city centers in the US are lucky enough to have. To me, all other considerations should be secondary to preserving this fundamental character. The Tivoli, the High Line, the Indianapolis Cultural Trail--all have their virtues, but I hate to see Portland sacrifice the rare and precious 150-year gift of an oasis in the city to the current design fashion of the "activated" linear, theme-park trail. I fear that designers are too often focused on the standards of their professional peers to the detriment of the interests of park users and the legacy of history. There's more than one good thing—and I believe it's short-sighted to repurpose an urban treasure like the SPB.
- This "preferred plan" would destroy one of the city's great gifts to its citizens and visitors.
- FOR 150 YEARS, NATURE'S OASIS AND PORTLANDERS' RETREAT. Let's keep it that way! Treasured for their enduring beauty, the South Park Blocks have long offered relief from the city's encroaching hardscape, growing noise pollution and frenzied tempo. Just as city-dwellers of the 1870s sought the timeless gifts of nature—deciduous trees that give shade in the summer and light in the winter, and quiet interspersed with birdsong—so do today's visitors to the South Park Blocks, be they solo or clustered. The Park Blocks need not serve all possible park-type functions—Portland boasts enough public land to see to all these needs, but why throw them together carelessly on unsuitable lands? There are ample numbers elsewhere of playgrounds, ball fields, concert venues and picnic tables. Why not retain the more subdued profile of the Park Blocks, an urban island of nature-blessed beauty that may be unique among Portland's parks: a spot to appreciate nature, think, read, visit and relax under an incomparable arch of mature elms (long may they survive) and other deciduous trees. The South Park Blocks do not need to serve as a dedicated play area, a concert venue, a picnic site, or a bikeway, all defined by a spreading concrete crust, intrusive outdoor furniture, unneeded pathways and uprooted trees. Thus changed, our Portland treasure would no longer bring joy to those who frequent it most through every season.

## Bicycles (23)

- Bikeportland.org has the best take on what bicycle improvements are needed. Protected bikeways are needed. Broadway is not a pleasant place for riding a bike and it is also a place for sunburns. The park blocks need a bike overhaul now.
- I would like to see continued investment in safer bike facilities
- I also hope they aren't seriously considering pavers for the bike lane - so loud, so dangerous. Maybe it was just a bad example picture.

- Alternatives to concrete pavers should be investigated for the separated bike lane. They don't work well for narrow tires, scooters, skates, or skateboards, and can be a source of noise. Asphalt strips like those used in Sevilla's major plazas, while less visually appealing, are better for multimodal paths.
- I am concerned that bicycles will still be able to go through Madison Plaza with whatever new treatment there.
- Why no accommodation for bicycles on the East side of the Park Blocks? Your documentation never mentions if the bike facility will be two-way, however the pictures show a two way facility. Is that correct?
- Please make protected bike lanes and improved safety for vulnerable road users a priority.
- "No painted green lanes in keeping with the historic character of the Cultural District." Cars aren't historic so I can assume that they aren't welcomed. Many of those buildings aren't historic either! So that argument seems a bit silly.
- Please ensure that the bicycle lanes are clearly visible and identifiable throughout the park blocks, including the transition zone in blocks 1 & 2.
- I appreciate the need for pedestrian and bike safety, but please leave out that bright green and white paint and flashing markers. The park blocks are green and lush and please keep them just that - a park!
- Do not carve out parts of the parks for bicycles.
- No bikes within park blocks.
- I'm very opposed to accommodating bicycles in any way in or near the park. Portland bike riders don't adhere to bike lanes and will still ride through the park, endangering pedestrians. What about scooters and skateboard riders?
- Bike routes should be located on Broadway not in the park!
- Adding intrusion of wheeled vehicles (bicycles, scooters, etc.) into the park destroys the safety, tranquility and purpose of this unique pedestrian asset. Keep such conveyances in streets (streets adjacent to E & W Park), not in park or its sidewalks. A diagonal bike paths across a block is overt folly. Pedestrians are already driven off sidewalks by bikes and scooters elsewhere. Please preserve the only remaining refuge.
- Strongly support improved bike accessibility.
- Leave the bicycles out and away from the park. There are streets nearby they use. No need to ruin a beautiful, relaxing setting with bicyclists zipping around. I realize they will be on their own little path but invariably some will come into the park where children are playing or people want to relax with any kind of vehicle rushing by.
- Although I understand bike culture in PDX, it would be nice to have one area where you don't have to worry about getting run over by a bike since they rarely follow the rules of the road. Keep this area for walkers but with access for cars to the Arts section of the greenway. Thanks!
- Don't give over any park space to bikes.
- Our moments to enjoy nature should not be made into an active play environment with bikes racing through. Bicyclists are rude, rarely ride in the streets but on sidewalks and never move for pedestrians. Bicyclists seem very entitled.
- Keep the bikes in the streets, not the park. I'm a cyclist, we have many good places to ride.
- Oppose a bike lane within the park blocks
- The Park Blocks feel full with people as it is- I don't think added bike spaces will help with interactions. Seems that the roadway is sufficient for bikes.

### **Historic Preservation and Nomination (23)**

- "Add gateway art or features that reflect diverse cultural history and identities of Oregon" is vague - I would like to see more focus on demonstrating the South Park Block's history and the history of the Cultural District. The Oregon Historical Society is right down the road, folks can go there if they want Oregon history.

When visitors are in the South Park Blocks, I'd like them to really feel like they're someplace special and hyper-local.

- The South Park Blocks are a valuable historic asset of the entire city. Preserving its intrinsic qualities is central to any future use.
- I would like to pause the master plan until the historic nomination is successful. We are losing so much of historic Portland to developers and bike lanes [who seem to be linked], please leave this beautiful park alone and preserve its integrity.
- I do wonder what impact the historic listing that Wendy Rahm is pursuing will have on this plan.
- Plan should be deferred pending listing under National Historic places and proceed considering that listing.
- I am strongly opposed to any national historic district for the south park blocks.
- This master plan should be put on hold until the historic nomination is complete. Then a more robust input process should take place.
- Must wait until Historical Designation Application has been accepted and approved.
- This plan fails to emphasize and preserve the historic aspects of the Park Blocks.
- New ideas and uses should not be stopped in the name of historic preservation.
- All "development" plans for the South Park Blocks should be put on hold until the SPB historic nomination is submitted and successfully determined.
- The Master Plan process should be paused to allow the historic nomination process to go first. It is the proper order. That nomination has a high likelihood of being approved and would provide a great base to blend a Master plan with. First things first!
- I want to see that the key historic design features (dating from 1870's) are respected:
  - Open space - flexible and adaptive -- for the enjoyment of all
  - 5 rows of Deciduous trees -- not evergreen -- in ordered ranks and axial alignment
  - Restrained and refined simplicity
  - Defined boundaries (i.e., curb to curb)
  - Green loop bicycles in the street only, not within the boundaries of the Park Blocks.
- This plan should not be finalized until after a decision is reached RE: historic designation. Historic designation would necessarily cause any current design plan adopted to be immediately out of date. Please work with the DNA and other organizations to formulate an optimal plan once you know what historic design aspects must be considered.
- The application and listing of the Historic designation for the Park Blocks should be completed as a first step prior to finalizing a Park Blocks master plan process.
- My preference is that the historic designation be greatly supported by the city, and they should assist in every way to move this designation submission quickly.
- Preserve the historic design principles.
- This master plan process should be paused until the historic nomination is completed. That is the only way to be sure that the defining historic characteristics can be respected.
- 2016 land use document note the applicant (funding source for the MP) "proposed listing the Park Blocks on the National Register of Historic Places; however, PP&R has [had] an agreement in place with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to list the Park Blocks in the National Register of Historic Places by 2020 and elected to pursue this listing on their own." (LU 15- 281248 DZM MS – Broadway Tower, April 21, 2016; p.18). Why is the nomination not already completed? Why was research for a nomination not in the scope of work for the MP historic consultant? Why did the nomination not precede the master plan?
- Please understand what have first, before you make it something else. That understanding begins with the nomination for National Register of Historic Places. Do that first!
- If I understand what I read about the Historic Registration for the South Park Blocks, this process would occur

after the Master Plan is completed. That seems backwards to me.

- The South Park Blocks Preferred Master Plan should not precede the completion of a National Register nomination, which is intended to inform its design. PP&R had an agreement with the Oregon SHPO to pursue listing by 2020. What happened with this agreement?

### **Pedestrian Safety / Street Crossings (21)**

- Crossing the streets can be very difficult and feels unsafe at busy times. I strongly support daylighting all intersections (removing parking at the corners) to make it easier for all users to see.
- Crosswalk safety cannot be emphasized enough. After having kids at St James childcare for 6 years now, we've learned that it's SCARY AS HELL to cross Jefferson or Columbia at any location between 10th and Broadway. Vehicle speeds are consistently excessive and almost no cars will yield to pedestrians at crosswalks or intersections.
- This project is in the city core and within close walking distance to many locations including the largest state university. There should be more tabled, raised crosswalks than the plan includes at present to slow traffic speeds, increase safety, and encourage walking for all vulnerable users of public right of way and space.
- Too many compromises made to accommodate cars and bikes. Get the cars off the Park Blocks, then there will be fewer safety issues with pedestrians. Move the bike paths to Broadway then there are even fewer safety issues for kids, families, and pedestrians in general.
- As a driver, pedestrian, and cyclist, I applaud the changes to promote better walkability and ease of cycling even at the expense of slightly longer waits [e.g., stoplights] or routes [redirection].
- Please go as far as you can in prioritizing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure over car infrastructure. Remember that this is a place that people, especially children and the elderly, can feel safe using, and they should be prioritized above all else.
- But it is really difficult to walk the full length of the Park Blocks right now because the street crossings don't match where you would want to cross based on the park itself. So it's good if you are addressing that.
- And the mid-block crossings should be raised.
- This is a walking park we have lots of cycling opportunities in town. Keep the historic strolling / walking nature of the park, keep bikes in the street. They are vehicles.
- And we're supposed to be taking Climate Change seriously!! The days of row after row of cheap curbside parking downtown needed to be over with ASAP!
- Include striped crosswalks at each block to Park Ave E.
- Propose alternative paving materials between each block to unify and alert drivers to pedestrian and cyclist crossing.
- The MP Path would be better considered separately - it absolutely should not intrude on the park, which remains one of the few pedestrian-friendly parks downtown.
- The South Park Blocks desperately need safe street crossings and minimization of high-speed traffic during rush hours.
- Keep all crossings.
- I think safe crossings of the E-W streets both at the corners and in the middle of the block are important.
- Clay is a very busy street during rush hour, and I've seen a fair share of emergency vehicles attempt to navigate down it during this time. I'm always amazed there is enough space for cars to pull over and let them through. I like the idea of a planted raised median, but wonder how this would work with emergency vehicles.
- I see a lot of very prominently marked pedestrian crossings on the west side of the park blocks. I understand this might be the case because of the greenway, but I think they are also important on the east

side. Pedestrians will likely want to connect to the center of the city/transit mall in this direction.

- Adjusting pathways to more closely follow paths actually taken by pedestrians, especially between PSU buildings, and to separate bike traffic, should help improve walkability.
- -Pedestrians should be encouraged to cross at every intersection, not just a few. Raised crosswalks would be nice to slow traffic in certain spots.
- Adjusting pathways to more closely follow paths actually taken by pedestrians, especially between PSU buildings, and to separate bike traffic, should help improve walkability.

### **City Funding Priorities (18)**

- Please spend those resources on the east side of the river. Better yet, spend it east of 82nd.
- You are going to do what you want however it is a shame to change something just because you want it new. When the east side of Portland needs so much help you are pouring money into something that doesn't need to be fixed.
- I am surprised there is money to accomplish this project which must be quite expensive. We are in the middle of a pandemic and our city is experiencing significant social unrest. My understanding is that the city budget has been cut for parks and maybe money should be directed to more urgent needs? The optics aren't good if a beautification project is started now.
- The South Park Blocks are fine as they are.... you're investing millions to spur development to make developers rich. It's a Neoliberal plan... not a public one. You're spending money to do something wholly unnecessary while you close swimming pools and defund parks in areas that serve actual people in need. Shame on you. #BLM #displacement #whitecitypriorities
- With a mayor and city council that would like to reduce or eliminate police financing, what will the redone South Park blocks look like in 5 years? Or one year? Will it be secure, clean and free from tents, tarps and garbage? Will neighboring residents, cultural sites, clubs and businesses feel more or less secure? Without very specific financially and politically backed plans for this area it will be a totally irresponsible use of public funds as it will be merely a place for inappropriate gatherings and loitering.
- This is absolutely not the right time to be spending money on a frivolous project that is not needed.
- This project seems ill-timed. While all of these projects are fine, the South Park Blocks are currently fully functional and open. Why not instead focus scarce Parks Bureau resources instead on figuring out how to re-open the entirely closed resources downtown, including O'Bryant Square and the southernmost block of the North Park Blocks between Burnside and Ankeny, as well as figuring out how to work with PBOT to accommodate the food carts that were displaced from the Alder Street pods and then never re-located, breaking promises made by the City last summer.
- Folks are dying and homeless and if your plan isn't including anything to help, you can all shove your budget and your tree canopy somewhere else where the sun don't shine.
- The city needs to spend its reduced funds on societal needs, retraining police, lowering cost of water and sewer services. This project is not a priority at this time.
- It also looks very expensive. In our current climate, we have more pressing ways to spend our money.
- Right now there is NOTHING wrong with the Park Blocks and there are places that need the money that this will cost much more. This plan shows the tone deafness of the Parks Department that they are still spending large amounts of money on central and downtown areas of Portland when so many Outer Portland areas still either need parks period or need update and improvement so much more than the Park Blocks.
- I hope that no changes are made in the next two years because the city has already depressing to live in, and if the Park is dug up and made ugly, the city would be horrific. Portland's few beautiful places include

these blocks, please do not disturb them now. I hope that there is no budget for this fully optional project, anyway, as it would be a wasteful use of scarce city resources.

- Spend the money in park deficient parts of the city...outer east and southwest. Whose idea was this anyway? It looks like it is a solution in search of a problem.
- What is wrong with you people? Why do you keep trading aesthetics, history, livability for more money like the greedy developers you cater to over citizens you allegedly represent? This is just another attempt at social engineering to make a city that does nothing to enhance the residents or instill a sense of pride that is primarily geared to giving more land to developers to increase density that already has tons of units (as opposed to homes) or attracting tourists who don't leave a sales tax here to help the revenue stream. I would love some of your kool-aid so I can still pretend this is a livable city...or one that works for us peons!
- You should put handwashing stations in areas you know people will be eating.
- How about taking this money and re-vamping Columbia Pool. It seems like all the Parks and Rec dollars go to rich white areas while those of us in N. Portland and East County get the short end of the stick..This is a criminal waste of money, especially at a time like this.
- It's an insult to taxpayers that you've ended Park and rec services, swimming pools, etc but have the funds to yank out trees to put in bike lanes and public art. These changes are a waste of valuable tax dollars that are in very short supply.

### **Community Engagement and Comment Survey (17)**

- Get more people in the city involved. This used to be a community process. I didn't even know about it until 6/27.
- This survey language is specifically skewed to reinforce the conclusion of the master plan and do not in any way respect the historical character of this nationally recognized unique and serene space in the middle of Portland. NOWHERE in the city can one find peace and quiet--all of these efforts are designed to destroy the tranquility of the space.
- Also be aware this survey is mentioned in BikePortland and will therefore get many responses from members of the bike community that probably never been to this park.
- As a resident of the South Park Blocks, I attend the Portland Farmer's Market every Saturday at PSU. I strongly recommend that the City of Portland consider their needs throughout this process. I would like to see any changes to the South Park Blocks positively impact the farmer's market experience; that event is part of the reason why I love living in the neighborhood so much.
- The virtual open house website is beautiful.
- This survey seems very biased and pro-developer.
- The "draft design concepts" from last fall were very hard to understand and gave no opportunity for combining features from one concept to another. There was insufficient representation on the advisory committee, and very little publicity about the planning process itself.
- This survey seems fairly biased to garner approval.
- This is a very complex and detailed story. Fortunately, I have looked at it several times and attended the DNA discussion. I do not know how much informed opinion you will receive.
- Coming back to this from the last page: your demographics questions ask where I live (southeast) but not where I work (just off the park blocks). Commute here daily and spend 40+ hours a week in this area. Workers should be taken into account in deciding whether survey responses are from people local to park blocks or not.
- This survey does little to allow public comments based on what's being proposed. Furthermore, the process does not seem transparent and allows for little public outreach and feedback.
- Wow. It is truly unfortunate that the majority of the people discussing this bloated, out of touch, and self-

indulgent project do not have the time nor patience to slog through such a clunky and inaccessible survey.

- PSU Students have participated in several design charettes over the years about the PSU Oak Savanna and garden spaces. A lot of energy, time, money, and design work has already went into these conversations and designs that could be referenced.
- As I submit this, I am also concerned that I learned today that the larger student body was not given a direct chance to comment on these plans. I know that a few were involved from the sustainability/gardens perspective, but it's just now being sent to students today, the week after classes are out.
- The survey would work better if there was a way to answer questions as you review each block. These are detailed statements to reflect on for very specific locations, so unless you have memorized everything it is difficult to do.
- This input would be easier if I could make it while reviewing the plan.
- Wow. It is truly unfortunate that the majority of the people discussing this bloated, out of touch, and self-indulgent project do not have the time nor patience to slog through such a clunky and inaccessible survey.

### **Green Loop (16)**

- I would rather see the Green Loop routed through Downtown on SW Broadway, which is far better suited to continuous bicycle traffic and—unlike the SPB—greatly in need of activation. The synergy between a lively Green Loop with festival and commercial and active uses along SW Broadway and a quiet green space in the SPB would be powerful, preserving the best of Portland's parkland legacy while giving new life to a moribund urban corridor.
- I'm definitely concerned about expecting bikes to ride through the park blocks and the shortness of the green loop. Why doesn't it go all the way down the park blocks? Biking and skating near pedestrians is dangerous for everyone, and it's more efficient to dedicate road space to bikes than cars. This is a great step forward, but I hope this project can take the green loop even further!!
- There need to be physically separated bike lanes, protected from traffic, on both the West Park and East Park streets, to facilitate bike travel on the Green Loop, in both directions. Putting one direction a block or two away is not easily understandable, and does not advance the Green Loop concept, which includes riding through tree-lined spaces with seating opportunities, etc., which the South Park Blocks have room for, and other street routes may not. Do not let the Historic District block bike lanes, either.
- Please preserve the bike facilities and complete the Green Loop!
- Please do not preclude the Green Loop path from using the South Park Blocks as envisioned in Central City 2035.
- I especially support the green loop through the park blocks.
- Plus, they're a crucial part of the \*Green Loop\*. You'll find a lot of entitled people trying to push bikes over to Broadway, which is RIDICULOUS! Do NOT fall for this! Again, this is the GREEN LOOP!
- Really glad to see the green loop shared use path in the cultural district, but am not sure why it doesn't continue further along the planned alignment
- Many people who ride bikes downtown like myself already use Park Aves. to more safely travel north and south through downtown. This use will only increase with implementation of the Green Loop. I often turn left (east) onto SE Madison from SW Park in order to get to the Hawthorne Bridge, and ask that bike facilities are built into the design for the vacated street on SE Madison. It is a key and safe connection from the Park Blocks to the Hawthorne Bridge for people on bikes.
  - I have responded that "don't know" to the items re the Green Loop. It is totally unclear to me how the north/south bike thoroughfare can be compatible with the pedestrians accessing the Park and all of the cultural, religious, residential, commercial and university buildings that line the Park. I have had to jump out of the way of thoughtless speeding bike riders on the greenway walk north of Willamette Park dozens of times

despite the posted 10mph speed limit.

- Bike loop violates historic context of park and abuses historic boundaries.
- Glad the green loop is included to get people out of their cars and healthier.
- I do not think the Green Loop will fit well, if it is to be cyclists all the time who are trying to go somewhere and who will not be cognizant of pedestrians.
- Scrap the two-way bike lane.
- Don't necessarily support the green loop going through Block 2. Would rather have it go up and along the south end of block two than through.
- For sure, not knowing what impact the "Green Zone" would have on use -- particularly cyclists on shared pathways -- makes it difficult to support. Wouldn't it be "greener" to create cyclist routes outside of the Park Blocks -- similar to the creation of the downtown transit malls -- expanding the non-vehicle footprint in Portland instead of just layering it on top of the current nature of the Park Blocks?
- I honestly think that putting the Green Loop bicycle path as a shared path through the University District is a disaster that could only make sense to someone who hasn't spent much time in the South Park Blocks. The pedestrian traffic is very heavy running from East to West particularly across Montgomery where commuters flow directly from the MAX and streetcar at Urban Plaza toward the classrooms on the West side of campus. They also flow back from that direction to Smith, Cramer, and FMH (Blocks 3-5). Those pedestrians aren't paying much attention to what's going on and they are moving in large groups. They're also moving heavily North-South on the West side of the Park Blocks to access the library, housing, and other services and classrooms further North. Having cyclists cross this heavy flow of pedestrian traffic through the University District seems very problematic. As someone who has dealt with cyclists as a pedestrian and utilized the mixed use paths in other parts of the city, it is very frightening because pedestrians are not treated with respect, and unfortunately, we don't all have rear-view mirrors attached at the neck to know what's coming up behind us. If I were a cyclist, I would also be frustrated to encounter the thick groups of people passing through perpendicular. I do not think that putting the Green Loop into the Park Blocks at this district improves safety. If you want it to bring the loop in at SW Hall, it should continue up to SW 10th (not crossing Block 2 diagonally) and should cut back to the Park Blocks no sooner than SW Mill to protect pedestrians. If this is not feasible, I think that the bike path should enter the Park blocks from the East no sooner than SW Mill (or further North). Otherwise you're compromising the closed, safe, pedestrian feel of the University District that is so much a part of how it has been experienced for several decades.

### **Cars on Park Avenue (16)**

- Park Ave should be closed to car traffic. It presents an unnecessary risk to public safety, wellbeing, and accessibility that people are allowed to drive cars along the south park blocks.
- Parking on street: For the cultural district blocks (Blocks 7-12), along west Park Avenue, keep both east and west lanes of on-street parking and east sidewalk. Leave as is or simply stripe sharrows on each block segment. Don't add a cycle track, and substitute only one or two parking spaces per block for the proposed drop-off zone (that the proposed cross section labeled). Cyclists and slow-moving cars can and already share the one-way Park Avenues, so there's no need for a one-way cycle track on west Park Avenue...
- No cars on NB/SB Park. Certainly no parking - that's just a waste of space.
- Remove all parking along SW Park Ave (E &W).
- The plan doesn't even attempt to address the problem of 24/7 vehicular access and parking, despite the reality that the public institutions lining the park blocks - PSU, churches, museums, performance venues - attract thousands of patrons in cars, busses, and vans. Expecting public transport to absorb this traffic seems unrealistic to me.

- I am deeply disappointed to see private car access and parking maintained on much of the South Park Blocks. Cars add noise, air pollution, and traffic safety risks. They don't belong here.
- I know there are pressures to maintain car access and on-street storage, including from nearby residents and PBOT. Failing to confront these pressures head-on will result in a far less visionary plan than Portland deserves. Please consider reinstating and expanding earlier proposals to restrict car access to the greatest extent possible to create a beautiful and comfortable South Park Blocks.
- Why retain driving lanes in any of the park blocks? Areas by PSU already closed to cars are the best. No parking garage entrances on the street, no real need to use this area for driving. Plenty of other car streets downtown.
- Simply prohibit motor vehicles from the park blocks. More park. More safety.
- There is zero reason for car lanes, or parking spots here.
- Protected bike lanes and a ban on cars would be an improvement.
- It appears that 9th Ave (Park Ave West?) has only one lane of traffic and no parking. How will the loading and unloading for the businesses and residential uses take place?
- I'd love to see a design that fully shuts down SW Park West or SW Park E to make more space, and/or does away with parking. Too much space is devoted to cars, even in this design.
- Close the streets as recommended.
- Remove the car lanes, they have no business in the tiny park blocks, and let people enjoy the park instead.
- More needs to be done to reduce auto traffic numbers and speed along and through the Park Blocks, particularly at Market and Jefferson!

### **Tree Canopy and Tree Succession Plan (15)**

- It is critical in any tree succession plan to preserve the character of the current mature park.
- Retain and reinforce the existing high canopy deciduous tree scheme.
- The South Park Master Plan calls for the removal of many canopy trees ..... do not remove these trees.
- Opening up the Park Blocks to more light is a mixed bag. The shade on warm summer days is a blessing. The dense canopy keeps a little of the rain out on drizzly days.
- I would like to see continued investment climate resiliency from improved resilience of the urban canopy. Also strongly oppose removing trees with no replacement in the central paths. The large tree canopy is the defining of the South Park Blocks. We don't need more concrete downtown.
- What I see in the plans is politically correct double speak and the 'after' photos show a distinct loss of trees and the shade they provide. The Park Blocks have always been like a familiar, comfortable, shady, grassy backyard. Why do they have to be turned into more formal, more commercial spaces? Leave them as is. Sure, replace dying trees but leave the rest alone. And don't plant evergreens, they have never been part of these parks.
- Keep the center row of trees as well as the other rows. Only replace trees that are diseased and dying. The trees make the park blocks what it is and is why people enjoy being there. Please leave it mostly alone.
- I live on park Ave. Please keep as much of the tree cover as possible, understanding that new trees will need to be planted and grow overtime so that future generations can enjoy tree cover in the central city.
- The current plan takes out too many trees and reduces the canopy.
- I can't comment on the details because I'm not a landscape architect, but one thing caught my eye: I'm glad you're planning to let some of the trees die a natural death and then not be replaced. As much as I LOVE all the trees in the South Park Blocks, there are too many of them. They give TOO MUCH wonderful shade, so the grass can't grow. That's not good. I'm glad you're planning to thin them out a bit.
- I'm concerned about the tree removal. I acknowledge that many of the trees are nearing the end of their

lives. I witnessed one of the elms break a large window of the student union. However, I worry about a plan that replaces so many mature trees with saplings and structures. It was unclear to me what was meant by "long term" for the removal. Is that a year? Fifty years? A ballpark would be helpful. Are you planting mature trees? Or just buying small trees like what you would get at a nursery?

- Portland's identity is a forest of giant trees and peaceful, natural outdoor space. If some trees are not healthy, replace them with the same type and relatively large size.
- I support the urban forestry idea for this city and your new design takes away from that. I recommend rather than do a complete make-over you address issues one at a time. Tree succession is a good option for starters.
- I like the existing shady canopy of deciduous trees that lets in more light in the winter. Keep the 5 rows of trees - that defines the character of the park.
- A succession planting strategy is sensible, but the one outlined seems designed more for developing the space than conservation.

### No changes (15)

- I vote to keep things as they are.
- There is no need for major changes to this idyllic city island.
- Leave the SP Blocks alone. This project is unneeded and will destroy an historic Portland treasure. City sponsored vandalism and vast amount of funds when we have urgent problems to deal with.
- Stop the exercise of changing the park, just so one builder could get the city's blessings of an exception - it's insulting to me!!!
- Why not just leave it the way it is now? The Park Blocks have served Portland very well for the last 150 years, thank you. The "improvements" proposed here will look dated in 5-10 years. Maintaining the Park Blocks current form will never go out of style. It is classic. This proposal is a solution in search of a problem.
- This is a successful park. There are many many unsuccessful parks in Portland. Why not invest in changing those? Please delay this process...
- My preference is that it be renovated not changed.
- Just leave it alone. It's beautiful as it is.
- Please leave this precious historical park alone, it is beautiful in its simplicity. I have been visiting this park since the I was a girl and despair at any of your changes. Please, please leave it alone. Do not develop, no bike lanes please. Leave something of precious Portland. Central Park in NYC would never allow this. The whole project sounds heartbreaking and disrespectful to our history. I am against all your plans.
- I actually like the park blocks very much as they currently exist and see little need for change. They are my daily refuge.
- Park blocks aren't broke, so need no fixing. City has horrible recent track record of "improvements" that are anything but, e.g., Vision Zero, Residential Infill Project, tree code revamp that does even less to protect trees, now this. Leave history and beautiful spaces alone please, and let's also save \$ we don't have. Thank you.
- Leave everything as it currently is. This master plan is a waste of money
- The South Park blocks are beautiful just the way they are. Put this on hold for at least 40 years and then revisit.
- I realize the changes will happen no matter what I write here, unfortunately.
- FOR 150 YEARS, NATURE'S OASIS AND PORTLANDERS' RETREAT. Let's keep it that way! Treasured for their enduring beauty, the South Park Blocks have long offered relief from the city's encroaching hardscape, growing noise pollution and frenzied tempo. Just as city-dwellers of the 1870s sought the timeless gifts of

nature—deciduous trees that give shade in the summer and light in the winter, and quiet interspersed with birdsong—so do today's visitors to the South Park Blocks, be they solo or clustered. The Park Blocks need not serve all possible park-type functions—Portland boasts enough public land to see to all these needs, but why throw them together carelessly on unsuitable lands? There are ample numbers elsewhere of playgrounds, ball fields, concert venues and picnic tables. Why not retain the more subdued profile of the Park Blocks, an urban island of nature-blessed beauty that may be unique among Portland's parks: a spot to appreciate nature, think, read, visit and relax under an incomparable arch of mature elms (long may they survive) and other deciduous trees. The South Park Blocks do not need to serve as a dedicated play area, a concert venue, a picnic site, or a bikeway, all defined by a spreading concrete crust, intrusive outdoor furniture, unneeded pathways and uprooted trees. Thus changed, our Portland treasure would no longer bring joy to those who frequent it most through every season. Instead, this “preferred plan” would destroy one of the city's great gifts to its citizens and visitors. There is no need for major changes to this idyllic city island.

### **Seating (14)**

- I especially like the grouped social spaces - except for Block 8, which seem overly large and not effective at letting people sit together. The new style seating looks ridiculous.
- I like the variety of seating options
- Social seating is fine in the university blocks but I'd really prefer it to be left out of most of the neighborhood blocks.
- The social seating as proposed that's just a flat-bench platform will likely act as a base for homeless people to camp. I don't like the ugly orange social seating either.
- All social seating, tables, art, play features, lighting must be vandal, graffiti and skateboard proof.
- Additional seating will be helpful, especially in the PSU area. I do not care for the idea of promoting large crowd-serving features in more places than there are now--one at PSU, and one on Main street.
- Please do not use the new wooden bench models outside of the Fariborz Masseh Hall on PSU property for use elsewhere in the park blocks. They retain water in the winter, rendering them useless, even when it is no longer raining. The current park block benches dry out much more quickly.
- Much of the added outdoor seating shown in the illustrations will allow for more camping, sleeping, and the possibility of large groups taking over space while smoking, dealing drugs, and ignoring other park rules.
- Social distancing strategy is needed because more pandemics are coming, thus dense seating and gathering must be comfortably spread out. Seating must include seats with backs and arms for older visitors. The homeless would camp on the many benches in the design, and already the homeless in the Park Blocks are too numerous. So, the seating designs must be changed to allow distancing and discouragement of homeless sleeping.
- And for the love of all that's holy, why does all the seating need to be social and interactive?
- All the "extra seating" is just gathering spaces for the already problematic homeless overtaking of the park blocks. We need to get the homeless issue under control before giving them yet another nice new renovated place to destroy so the rest of us who paid for it can't use it.
- With seating, please ensure that it is universal and can be used by folks with disabilities.
- Concerned that increased ‘community seating’ will be invitation to those that abuse the park by congregating (drug use and intimidation)
- Most of the new seating planned appears to be social, aimed at groups rather than individuals.

### **Plantings (14)**

- Please maintain and increase shade and native plants as much as possible.
- I really like the increase in native plantings--those are attractive, potentially educational, and

environmentally friendly.

- The native plantings pictured as examples look too much like the understory of a forested area, not in keeping with the stateliness of this historic central city park.
- Nice job in including NATIVE PLANTS in the plan--although the renderings were sometimes of great concern. I hope we can do without the Saw Palmettos (or whatever they are).
- Why would you do away with the roses, another Portland identity and heritage?!
- Please don't remove the center plantings. They add to the garden-like flavor of the park.
- Keep the roses! We're the "Rose City", after all - Portland guides point these out to visitors, and residents volunteers are dedicated to helping maintain them.
- Keep the roses! We are the Rose City and they smell wonderful.
- Oppose removing the roses and other center beds
- I do not understand the removal of roses to pots rather than gracing the Art Museum and Historical Society buildings. After all the is supposed to be The City of Roses...
- The rose plantings in the Cultural Blocks are very popular; lots of visitors take photos; provides color and fragrance in an otherwise green expanse. KEEP THEM.
- One sustainability problem is that all proposed new plantings would be trampled by pedestrians, bikes, skateboards and dogs if they are not in raised beds, no fences or barriers. Rose Lane Project is impractical due to great potential for damage by users.
- Planted buffers (park Ave W/Green Loop bikeway): This being a slim buffer, planting selection should consider the contemporary urban realities of park use. The historical park roses have worked well because their thorny nature and ability to survive mistreatment while still looking lovely. A "swath of color" perennial/annual flower on flat surface would not only be yanked out/picked/ stomped on, but also require extensive amount of care to maintain. Point being, if the buffer line is meant to be spot for roses " in keeping with historical character of cultural district" , then, that is a good choice with one caveat. Roses work to prohibit certain destructive behaviors if they are grouped a little, like the gardens, not just a single line. The whole idea, I would think, is to display a healthy and lovely flower experience while not requiring or incurring excessive ongoing maintenance expenses.
- Although I like the idea of smaller shrubs and planting, that is where trash often collects. And since it breaks the line of visibility it can feel less secure. If I had to run, it would be easier to run over grass than through low shrubs. Not sure how tall the plantings will be - can people be obscured behind them? Will this require more lighting? Will the lighting annoy the tenants in the buildings?

### Trees (13)

- This park means so much to Oregonians, it is one of the last stands of elm trees in the USA and one of the few original parks in Portland. Please, please leave it in its natural beauty.
- Don't mess with the old canopy elms.
- Deciduous trees only.
- DON'T REMOVE THE TREES! ! YOU CAN'T REPLACE MATURE TREES WITH SAPLINGS. EVERYBODY WANTS TO CUT TREES & PUT IN MORE CONCRETE & STONE, CANOPIES, REMOVABLE OR NOT TAKE AWAY AESTHETICS OF -T R E E S- !
- Avoid evergreens, we are dark enough in the winter.
- The Oak Savanna is a space that is sacred for the NASCC Community; please consider coordinating with them in your land use plans and efforts in the park blocks. The Oak Savanna has been a site of conflicting uses due to the dogs that use the area after sacred plantings occur by PSU students in Native American communities and Indigenous Nations studies department. Please consult with Judy Bluehorse Skelton.

- This introduces evergreens in a park that is too small for them, doesn't protect the 5 rows of trees in alignment.
- In general: I am not sure where evergreens, firs and such, fit in. But they should not be part of the new tree plantings.
- Conifers at the south end of Block 1 will create a gloomy place in winter and often an inhospitable place year-round.
- I am heartbroken you plan on removing so many of the elms, it looks like around 20%. The world is quickly losing so many trees over a hundred years old, they provide so much richness to our environment and urban animals.
- Retain all trees until their natural life cycle is achieved.
- Please don't take down any healthy trees!
- I am very opposed to the removal of Trees.

### **Central Promenade (13)**

- Central Promenade through park is too much hardscape in this walk through park. It makes it more of a straight though shot for skateboarders/scooters/bikes. The historical nature of the design was for people to pause a bit on bench, read, visit with friend, meet a lover, walk through the park and feel refreshed from the city cacophony of sounds and hardscape concrete.
- I like the central promenade idea, but I'm not sure that the park blocks are wide enough to accomplish the desired atmosphere. I worry that it might feel too exposed and the ratio between pavement and vegetation will be off balance.
- What was unclear to me is: are you replacing the center of the Park Blocks with a path? If so, are there also paths on either side? I found that a bit confusing.
- Promenade: For the cultural district blocks (Blocks 7-12), keep the existing set-up of two central walkways instead of removing trees to create a central walkway. Unlike the photo examples of a promenade, which I assume come from Central Park in New York City because I've visited that promenade near 5th Avenue and E. 60th Street, the South Park Blocks are too narrow to have side landscaped areas to complement a wide central promenade. The promenade would eliminate the appearance of a park through loss of trees and lawn or groundcover. To be clear, my comment excludes new or enlarged plazas (symbolized in pale yellow) in line with or extending from what would be a promenade (medium gray). I think the existing walkways subtly encourage clockwise one-way movement (southbound on the west walkway and northbound on the east walkway).
- The promenade images suggest that both the central pathway and the adjacent grass areas will get wider. That seems unrealistic
- The South Park Blocks Master Plan calls for consolidating the two walkways into a single walkway do not create the single walkway.
- This increases the likelihood of conflicts within the park by creating a single central promenade instead of keeping the 4 existing choices,
- Sidewalks on both sides of the park are important for safety.
- Generally, I like the promenade idea for its simplicity and openness. I think it will be important to think about sight lines going down it, right now my eyes are always directed toward the trees in the middle of the planters. I'm curious what they might be guided toward in the future. I think it could help with drawing people toward newly activated parts of the park blocks.
- I also like the central promenade but I love the current parallel paths.
- since you are moving toward a single central path in blocks 7-12, it might not feel like there are as many places to slow down and sit by yourself. I cannot remember if you had seating that branched off from the

main central path.

- Bifurcated walkways are preferable to central promenade.
- I'm not a fan of the wide central promenade. hard surfaces should not make up the majority of the footprint of the park.

## **Vehicle Traffic and Parking (12)**

- Please remove as much parking as needed to provide a safe and pleasant experience for walking, biking, and rolling.
- Removal of far more car parking is needed.
- The park blocks are a special place in our city and I encourage continuing to deprioritize vehicle traffic in the immediate vicinity, ideally restricting or deterring cross-traffic in the park blocks except for major designated roads such as Market. Consideration should be made for either permanent or time-based traffic calming on these major roads in the vicinity of the park blocks as well. As an example, through traffic permitted during peak commute times, with traffic calming / lane restrictions in place outside of those hours and potentially blocked completely on weekends.
- I'm mainly writing in to encourage Portland Parks and Recreation and the Portland Bureau of Transportation to push themselves farther on limiting automobile access and making more of the public right of way available to people walking and biking. Doing so is in line with our equity goals, our climate goals, our air quality goals, and a crucial opportunity to make public space available to a larger number of Portlanders. This park, located in the center of the densest neighborhood in the state and with abundant transit access, simply does not need to give away so much space to private automobiles - and would be enhanced with quieter, cleaner streets without automobiles. I think the city should move forward with car free blocks, with raised crossings, and with every inch of this park designed to accommodate people instead of cars.
- I'd like to add my voice to support increased traffic calming measures on streets crossing the Park Blocks. As someone who uses the Park Blocks regularly (I work at PSU), I find it often annoying to walk or bike down the Park Blocks from PSU to downtown because drivers on streets that cross the Park Blocks often refuse to stop for pedestrians who are trying to cross in the crosswalks no matter whether they are in the middle of the Park Blocks or at the edges. It really detracts from the park-like setting of the Park Blocks, because you constantly have to battle auto traffic. To compound the problem, there are no stop signs for cars driving across the Park Blocks so they speed up (I think that speed is what makes them unlikely to stop for pedestrians). This is a residential and highly pedestrianized area but currently it feels like cars and drivers are given priority. I don't see a discussion of traffic calming in this proposal. The example of a promenade you show is of Central Park in NYC, which is largely uninterrupted by cars. I would appreciate if you could work with PBOT not to just separate traffic modes, but to really and significantly slow down the drivers and calm traffic. I also want to urge you to imagine and work on a goal for a completely car-free Park Blocks and have that as your ultimate goal with the current design as an intermediate step.
- Extremely disappointed in the preservation of vehicle traffic through the South Park Blocks. This is at odds with the vision of the Green Loop and a modern walkable and bikable city. This area has the potential to be a world-class biking and walking hub. Instead we have a narrow separated bikeway. This would be a huge missed opportunity.
- I think that parking and private vehicles are very poor uses of space in and near the South Park blocks, including on roads.
- Please make it car-free.
- Permanent closure of Main through the S Park Blocks is an excellent idea
- I think the plan will impair access to First Congregational Church for elderly people who don't walk or bike.
- The South Park Blocks should be carfree to provide the safest and most enjoyable experience for people

walking and cycling through this resource.

- I am very opposed to the removal of car lanes in this area. The traffic during peak times is heavy enough. Covid 19 has taught us that public transport (max and bus) are not all that healthy and it's ageist and ableist to assume that everyone is riding bikes.

### **Maintenance and Security (10)**

- What the park does need is a reliably funded program of professional maintenance; any money made available for the proposed changes would be better dedicated to the care of the special place we already have.
- The increase in program spaces is counter the Park Bureau's current capabilities. The current DECREASE in park programs and inability to maintain what we have doesn't make this plan look reasonable.
- New plantings in beds and as buffers adds a tremendous amount of additional maintenance work in the park. Plantings are much more labor intensive than turf.
- As a downtown resident who walks the 2.1 mile loop of these blocks 3-4 times a week-- sometimes twice in one day--I can say that only the south end is in need of care. PSU has not kept their part of the bargain. Poorly cleaned and managed. Look at the weeds around Shattuck Hall for example. Giving them MORE responsibility is wrong headed.
- I would like to see updated waste and recycling receptacles within each of the blocks, especially in the University District portion of South Park Blocks.
- Any plan should include funding for action AND maintenance of the plan.
- Creates too many new planting beds that will not be properly maintained due to lack of funding,
- All of these plans look great but who is going to monitor these additions? Without monitoring these new seating spaces and covered areas may quickly be destroyed or used as temporary housing for folks who may have no other options. Also, what sort of issues will these spaces cause for PSU as there may be more non-PSU folks around campus all the time. The art and tree projects seem awesome, but it seems to be without proper vetting and a plan to monitor these spaces they will be a poor investment.
- Currently these 12 blocks are not safe, are hanging out places for street people, drug dealers, have trash everywhere and tent sites.
- We need improved availability of Park Rangers.

### **Parking (9)**

- Very concerned about reduction in parking in cultural district. Not so much for residents but for guests of residents and/or vendors/couriers who already struggle now at rush hours. More loading/short-term parking only areas would be critical.
- The amount of cars parked in this corridor should be reduced overall. Leave the cars out of the park.
- We don't need to preserve automobile storage over space for people.
- The proposal removes too much parking from the part of downtown that appears to attract the most visitors, particularly with the art museum and the performing arts center. The nearest SmartPark garage (at 10th Ave) is too distant from most of the blocks. The South Park Blocks are already one of the safest areas for cyclists compared to elsewhere, particularly East Portland. Drivers already take a cue from their surroundings to go slow and stop a lot. I've also seen far more pedestrians and cars than cyclists along the blocks. This would keep the approximately 84 parking stalls along west Park Avenue in these six blocks.
  - If no or minimal change is defeated, I'd urge a Plan B that keeps approximately half of existing parking using one of two parking lanes along west Park Avenue and adds a one-way cycle track. Revise the proposed cross section from left to right from the proposed travel lane of 12 feet (which is too wide anyway; it would encourage speeding), buffer of 6 feet, and cycle track of 12.5 ft to: west side parking lane

of 8 ft, a travel lane of 10 ft, a striped buffer of 2 ft with flexible plastic poles, and a one-way cycle track of 10.5 feet. This would fit within the existing west curb and the east edge of what is now the east sidewalk and keep about 42 parking stalls. (This outcome would be similar to the west side of Director Park, where on-street parking is on the west but not the east side of that street.)

- Parking is a problem. Having events and other large gatherings will bring more people as well as more cars. What's the plan for parking?
- I am disappointed to not see a recommendation to remove the on-street parking that was added adjacent to the park. That parking greatly reduces the safety of the streets and greatly reduces the attractiveness of the park. I think parking could be acceptable adjacent to the sidewalk, but not next to the park blocks. Instead of cramming bikes together in a dangerous 2- way , remove the parking and create more space for people biking, jogging, skateboarding, etc. A one-way, 9' lane would be a safe, comfortable recreational experience that is much more in keeping with the spirit of the park blocks and historic district that the parked cars, which were not a part of the original design.
- Remove at LEAST TWO lanes of parking! The South Park Blocks should be for PEOPLE, not CARS!
- If the on-street parking goes away, what will replace it? This is important for students.

### Statues (9)

- It appears that the present statues of Lincoln and Roosevelt would remain, but it is not entirely clear.
- In view of our current social climate, however, might be a great idea to remove the statues of white men and replace them with a more up to date representation of the history of the land.
- Additionally, considering the long-needed national discussion and Portland's long history of white supremacy, designing a park around a statue of Theodore Roosevelt is tone deaf at absolute minimum.
- Just one thought: the statue of George Washington off of NE Sandy was recently toppled. I assume it will be restored at some point. But consider whether it should be put back at its old location or placed in the center of the new "Madison Plaza" to create a trio of Presidential statues, flanked by Lincoln and Roosevelt.
- Take Teddy off the horse.
- Please remove statues of Lincoln and Roosevelt and replace with BIPOC people.
- I'd like to see the removal of the statues of Lincoln and Roosevelt to be replaced by artwork acknowledging Oregon's troubled racial history and erasure of indigenous peoples.
- I would like to ask that you all remove the Roosevelt and Lincoln statues and replace them with statues of political figures from Black history. We don't need to keep celebrating slave owners.
- How about a statue of a non-racist, non-white, non-man?

### Art (9)

- All art in this park should be developed and managed by the Portland art museum.
- And for the love of god, stop putting people on the 'art.' Vegas odds you are definitely going to get it wrong, and even if you didn't it will be dated and irrelevant by the time you hit dirt.
- Most of the interactive art samples are repulsive.
- Do hate to see the Orpheus Fountain removed.
- My only concerns are how well interactive art installations will be maintained over time-- rotating art installations sound promising, but I would worry about interactive features breaking down and not being replaced if they are seen as permanent and sufficient funding isn't secured.
- When selecting art, please avoid anything tokenizing or created by white people for a surface appearance of "diversity and inclusion" without complex, intersectional representation of minoritized/marginalized

identities. Thank you!

- Playground and changing art exhibits, esp. as they allow the arts district to blend with the park blocks, are terrific.
- I would like to see the following idea replicated somewhere between blocks 1-6, the PSU area: Example of art or interactive features to reflect diverse cultural histories and identities for Blocks 10 & 11. I think having a flow of this information throughout the entire SPB would help to reaffirm the commitment to acknowledging histories and identities.
- Can you clarify who would administrate the rotating art exhibitions on Block 6 - PSU, City, a collaboration?

### **Homeless / Houseless Community (8)**

- People set up tents, sleep on benches or in sleeping bags in the park blocks. These people have not been tested for Covid-19, and there is no city effort to deal with this crisis. Our South Park blocks no longer belong to all of the community.
- Consider safety primary in usage. Develop plan for transients and drug use. Homeless / Houseless Community.
- I'm also concerned about permanent street closures that give housed folks more space and while not addressing the needs of houseless folks.
- My main concern about improvements to the South Park Blocks is that they will, intentionally or unintentionally, make homeless neighbors unwelcome in the park. I live in the Cultural District and believe that my homeless neighbors have just as much a right to use these spaces as I do, but I worry especially about whether new social seating will have hostile design elements (e.g. metal bars at varying intervals to discourage sleeping). I am so excited about many of these improvements, but please don't use hostile design to kick out the homeless just so white cyclists and concertgoers have more gentrified green space devoted to them.
- This project does not address the most consistent users of the space, i.e., the homeless population and people who are forced out of shelters with no place to rest in the city. Not providing any space for homeless people to exist and be in their neighborhood will not erase them or make them invisible.
- I suspect a bunch of Karens who don't want to see homeless people designed this. The homeless are Portland residents who deserve their peaceful, free spaces preserved.
- Also, please consider the volume of homeless in the Cultural District. They often congregate in the area in order to stay out of the way of other business and walking traffic.
- I want you to address the serious homeless crisis in the South Park blocks, specifically the neighborhood and Peace Plaza and Roosevelt Plaza. There are dangerous behaviors that make residents, groups of children, families, older citizens, women walking alone and visitors to museums afraid. Many groups of unwashed, unhoused men gather and dominate the benches, particularly near the public loo. There is spitting, smoking, public urination, drug paraphernalia and garbage on the ground. There are many mentally ill who are sometimes agitated. They don't need the police, they need mental health care and should not be wandering in the park and streets. It is not safe during the Pandemic, but also problematic during normal times.

### **Lawn and Grass (7)**

- If you have the grass too long, needles will be hidden in the grass.
- Replacing lawn with native plants is great up to a point.
- I think native planting, ground covers, etc can work in what is currently lawn areas but they should be carefully designed to not look wild or overgrown and messy.
- Still way too much grass in the Cultural district. At the last open house, many, many comments and notes

talked about less grass and more native plantings. In the draft preferred design, there is still not enough native plantings and way too much grass. Please, listen to us.

- I am also saddened you plan to remove so much lawn space. I like the native planting, but people also need access to sitting in grass and feeling nature. If you do the research, you will find sitting in natural landscapes, touching plants and grass literally helps our mental health. People need a grass space to spread their blankets and sit with their children. These spaces are hard to come by in an urban environment.
- Additionally, while I favor replacing certain areas of grass with native plantings, the amount of grass that would remain is unclear. In one of the tree designs, the key seemed backwards, indicating native plants in most of the area in the current layout, where there is currently grass. This made it difficult to assess what is being proposed in the mock-up for the new design. There needs to still be a large grassy area for students. They love laying a blanket on the grass in summer. So many promotional PSU photos feature students doing just that. It would be very sad if so many grassy areas were replaced by structures and large pathways.
- As the surrounding blocks get built up, we need to keep the grassy places, even the small patches between the two paths.

### **Restrooms / Portland Loo (4)**

- I didn't see anything about bathrooms in this. I hope the plan keeps the one we do have--and even adds another.
- Where are the public toilets? Is the only existing one to be removed?
- Leave the loos.
- I hope the Portland Loo will remain in the design, and I would like to see another installed.

### **Dogs (4)**

- Off-leash dogs are an issue in this park already. It's the law yet ignored, and owners get belligerent (see Central Park Karen story) when asked to leash their dogs. How can this issue be addressed by Park Rangers, PSU campus police, etc?
- There is a clear demand for a fenced dog park in the area that should be strongly considered.
- Downtown Portland, in general, lacks safe off-leash dog spaces, compared to nearby districts: e.g., pearl district, and NW district. Dog parks promote leash law compliance, helps keep walk paths and green areas clean, and also serve as community building spaces. I believe there is a great opportunity within the project vision for a dog park. thank you!
- I love the Park blocks and live here. I'm concerned about residential use such as dogwalking.

### **Skateboards (3)**

- Remove the skateboarding deterrents too. Skateboarding is a healthy activity.
- I realize skateboarding and sleeping on community benches is viewed as problematic and mediated through design features like metal strips. To reduce the need for this, have you considered allocating space for a small skate park?
- Why isn't there a space created for skaters, since they are frequently at the park as well? Instead it is noted that "deterrents" will be established to prevent skaters from using the space.

### **Questions**

- What is the estimated cost of these changes?
- Tax ramifications?
- How will rules be enforced: no smoking, bike riding, skateboarding, scooter riding?
- Will there be drinking fountains, hand washing stations, public toilets, and

trash/recycling/compost facilities?

- Even before the events of the past weeks, who does this space serve? Who does it reflect and represent? Are you discussing diversity or are you performing it?

### **Other / General**

- Without having specific knowledge of the number of users, the types of users it's tough to embrace this plan full on.
- Will be challenging to get community support and excitement due to complexity of populations and activities in this area. May also be difficult to get funding in near future.
- There is a clear demand for a community and/or student garden.
- The "place-making" installation examples were all rather ugly. Please remember that a city park doesn't need to be a hub of activity to have value; it serves better as a refuge from activity. If I want excitement I can go clubbing.
- Please abide by PSU commitments made to the blocks in 1970.
- Support the DNA recommendations
- ignores the needs of local residents (who don't live in single family homes in green neighborhoods so who consider this park vital to their well-being)
- Adding physical structures is a major distraction and fateful step in the wrong direction. Once begun, it will only expand. A very bad idea.
- This project has not received the TV or newspaper.
- The original plan was unique and should be more respected.
- I like the addition of free charging stations for all.
- The negative reactions to these new spaces are overwhelming. Is this a competition in cheap modernity? A challenge to make one Portland park indistinguishable from another? An effort to cover the entire city in flexible cement event spaces and bicycle freeways? Are our decision makers really \*that\* blind to the perceptions that 'New Portland' growth has done zero to integrate and smooth older aesthetics to current? And again, WHY SO MUCH CONCRETE. Not every space needs to be 'useful' or 'usable.' Not every space has to be potentially profitable or marketable. These motivations are not hidden nor is their message missed.
- I wish you could put some pressure on PAM to TAKE OUT the parking space closest to SILVESTER SYCAMORE. It is shocking to see vehicles parking so close to the tree there when what should happen there is a rain garden to save the tree from some of the pollution of their newly re-surfaced otherwise TREELESS ASPHALT DESERT of a parking lot. Silvester has long shown signs that s/he needs more TLC.
- So glad to see the city continue the ongoing project to destroy Portland's character.
- Just let parks be parks stop screwing them up and get rid of the homeless.
- You won't scrap these plans, even though you should. If nothing else, the tone-deafness of Portland leadership remains wildly on-brand. Look forward to hearing complaints of not knowing this was happening and criticisms of how stupid/ugly/etc it is. Luckily for you, the public certainly isn't under the impression that anyone is listening anyways.

# Focus Groups Summaries

## Portland State University Students

In February 2020, Tate White, Barbara Hart, and Eder Katembwe met with 14 Portland State Students for a two-hour focus group to review and discuss the design concept options for the South Park Blocks. The group included student leaders from the My Africa Business Club, Financial Management Association, Green Council and Student Sustainability Center. The purpose of the focus group was to engage students with diverse perspectives including students of color, immigrants and refugees and students living with disabilities.

On **June 22, 2020**, we followed up with six of these participants on Zoom to review and discuss the Draft Preferred Design. After introductions and a recap of the previous focus group and planning process to date, the project manager presented the Draft Preferred Design. The purpose of this follow-up focus group was to overview the Draft Preferred Design, answer any questions, discuss if the Draft Preferred Design reflected their previous input, and encourage participants to take the survey and spread the word about the Online Open House and Survey to their friends, family, and colleagues.

At the first focus group, a desire was expressed to see more community gardens in the park for students experiencing food insecurity. The project team explained that while they were supportive of the concept, it was not something that could be integrated into the Draft Preferred Design as the South Park Blocks are narrow, highly programmed spaces. Design and technical analysis suggest there is insufficient available space and solar access to support a successful community garden within the South Park Blocks. Through previous planning and policy work, PP&R has established that we do not have enough appropriate park land to meet the demand for community gardens. To resolve this challenge, our Community Garden Program partners with schools, churches and other property owners to combine community garden resources with increased land capacity. The project team encouraged the interested students to reach out to PP&R's Community Garden Coordinator to explore partnerships to expand the [existing student garden programs](#) on University property. Having more space to work with will help benefit more students experiencing food insecurity.

### Feedback included the following:

- First impression is that it is awesome
- Good job of hearing the public concerns
- Like the addition of evergreen trees – important for stormwater management.
- Concerned about anti-skate design elements
- Skateboarding is a legitimate form of transportation for many
- Has worked towards incorporating a lot of different ideas and seems like a good compromise
- Please continue to work towards making more inclusive spaces
- Favor for representing more diversity in cultures and identities
- Important to make sure that everyone feels welcome
- The historic presentation opposition seems like coded language
- Work at telling more diverse stories through visuals that are reminder of roots of Portland – great for visitors
- Temporary canopy seems like it might be too labor intensive or costly
- Like the idea of bringing art into the park – look at San Francisco MOMA who provides art in public spaces that can be viewed without paying an entrance fee
- Please engage non-white artists for new work – PBOT is working on a Black Street Art Request for Proposals that could be a good model

Additional Questions and Discussion focused on transportation issues, including:

- Elimination of street parking to accommodate the Green Loop
  - o Questions about the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT)'s thoughts on this. Response explained that it was something PBOT planning was advocating for in order to promote more sustainable modes of travel. PBOT parking groups are concerned about lost parking revenues and service. Their new data-informed dynamic parking model will be good way to explore how to best implement this through more detailed design and construction.
- For vehicle travel lanes that remain, are raised crosswalks still being considered?
  - o Yes, this is still recommended as a best practice but there are many drainage challenges to design and implement successfully. Due to uncertainty at this concept level phase, proposals of specific crossing treatments have been removed from the park master plan, but we will be recommending that PBOT continue to pursue the safest crossing options.

Discussion about being interested in doing a focus group like this with PBOT when transportation details are being explored further.

## Native American Community Advisors

On July 28, 2020, Barbara Hart and Tate White met with members of the Native American Community Advisory Committee that participated as advisors on the South Park Blocks Master Plan.

### **Feedback included the following:**

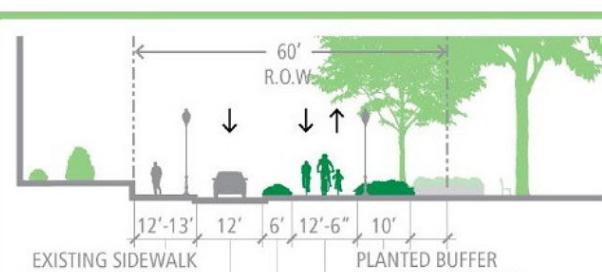
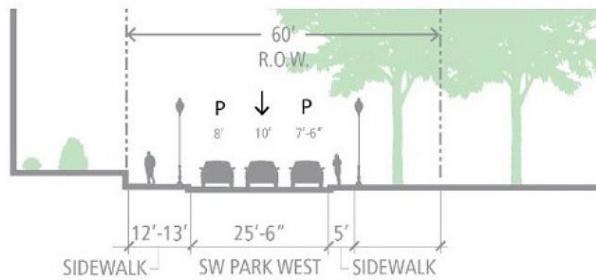
- Information was provided on the PSU Oaks Savannah. The new PSU President has shifted the conversation to recognize the role of resiliency, reconciliation, and healing in the landscape.
- By, contrast, they were disappointed to see the by the monoculture focus of the Draft Preferred Design with the replanting of Elms. They would like to see much more species diversity.
- A presentation on the draft historic nomination has been shared with them and they were deeply hurt by the focus on settler culture and the European-influenced park design which feels like the erasure of Native American history and culture.
- Happy to see the introduction of Evergreen trees for more diversity and added habitat value. Potential of what could be done at Block 1 is really exciting. Pacific Madrone is a great Evergreen with medicinal properties and Douglas Fir may be more difficult to have plants be successful underneath.
- \$150,000 of PP&R budget every year goes to inoculation of existing elms for Dutch Elm disease which seems to provide financial incentive to move away from elms and monocultures.
- Tribal liaison is working on a process to more respectfully involve and incorporate Indigenous communities in land use planning processes.
- Instead of statues of Teddy Roosevelt and Lincoln, it would be great to have native sculpture of some kind and a spot reserved for a Black artist. The art could be rotating so there is less permanent.
- The rows of trees feel colonial, which is too bad. Would like to see more of a decolonizing landscape. Could native understory be added to soften these lines and create a more resilient landscape?
- Historic nomination presentation quotes the poetry of Emerson, but Emerson was inspired by the diverse forest near his house.

# Comments Submitted by Email

1. Delay. I urge Portland Parks (Parks) to delay the Plan until the nomination for historic status has been filed by the Downtown Neighborhood Association (DNA) and determinations made by state and federal agencies. The determinations should precede any final draft of the Plan.
  
2. Equity. I have heard that Chautauqua Pool in North Portland will be closed. If true, where is the justification for putting all this money into the Plan. Has Parks lost its equity lens?
  
3. Costs. I have also heard that Parks need more funding. Again, if true, where is the justification for starting a major new project like the Plan before Parks can show Portland residents how and when it will right its ship.

Julie Livingston, Design Commission Chair, and Commissioners  
 Kristen Minor, Landmarks Commission Chair, and Commissioners:

I support the South Park Blocks Master Plan. I also support the proposed routing of the Green Loop in the central blocks, from Salmon to Market, along the eastern edge of SW Park West, as shown in the plan:



This seems like an excellent compromise, which will separate bicycle and pedestrian and auto traffic. It does not extend any paving beyond where there is already paving. It does not affect any trees, and will in fact create a more pleasant space by removing auto parking, thus reducing the amount of parked cars which intrude in that space today.

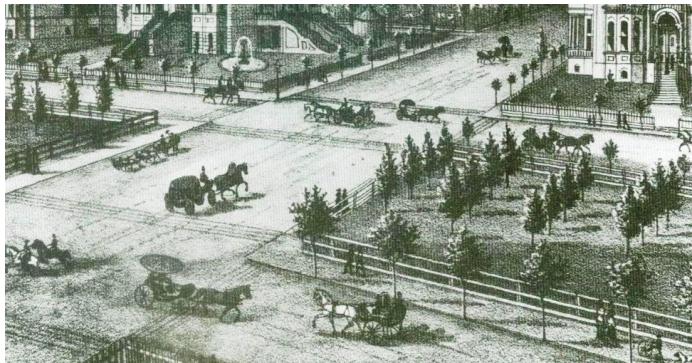
I disagree with the Downtown Neighborhood Association's push to designate the blocks as Historic, wherin one motive seems to be to block this bike facility.

While yes, the fact that there are rows of trees could create an "historic" claim for the rows of trees only, I fail to see any continuity of "historic" significance for the various hardscape and/or paving patterns that have existed over the years.

The earliest images show not only trees in the Blocks, but along the curb lines:



1870 It appears that sidewalks were initially wood, with curbline trees within them.



1880s (?)

By 1911, separated concrete sidewalks had been built, with a "planting strip" along the curb for the trees:



## 1911-1912

Shemanski Square from Main Street  
looking toward Arlington Club

Some time later (in the 1940s?) the sidewalks were rebuilt as curb-tight narrow walks, and most (later all) of the curbline trees removed:



1970

In 1987 or so, these curb-tight concrete walks were replaced with the pavers we see today:



2017

So, there was no consistent pattern along the edge of the blocks that survived from the historic period proposed, to the present.

I see no reason that today's sidewalk outline has any historic status. The proposed plan would, in fact result in paving in the same place as today, and keep all the remaining trees at this point.

(I also support using better, modern forestry practices to achieve a healthier canopy, which may include not replacing some trees as they decline. The "5 rows of trees" is not necessarily what's historic, so much as "parallel rows of trees and a continuous canopy")

In addition, it is important to listen to all voices in the community, many of which were represented on the Committee, and balance today's needs with the desire for historical continuity, so "history" can continue to evolve, and not be frozen at one time period.

Thank you

The Park Blocks represent a unique feature of life in downtown Portland. I live in the Eliot, and would not have chosen to live downtown otherwise. Friends and family who visit always comment on this feature, unique for the center of an American city. The long expanse of canopied trees and open spaces are reminiscent of European cities that provide such spaces for their residents as a place to walk and/or sit quietly in the midst of the hubbub of a city.

Especially in the situation we now all find ourselves in, to make the proposed changes that would involve removing trees, the historic rose garden, and adding tables, planters, and other items that would clutter that space feels even more like something essential to our life here would be destroyed. We live in a changed world, and any proposed new plan should reflect that reality. In addition there is the ongoing issue of global warming and the essential role our trees are playing.

Thank you for your consideration.

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1. Delay I urge Portland Parks (Parks) to delay the Plan until the nomination for historic status has been filed by the Downtown Neighborhood Association (DNA) and determinations made by state and federal agencies. The determinations should precede any final draft of the Plan. Why?

It is clear to me after listening for two hours to presentations by Parks re the draft Plan, and by PBOT re additional planning ideas for Blocks 10, 11, and 12, that the Plan is and continues to be a work in process. Many items in the Plan are evidenced by examples, while the PBOT ideas, worthy of consideration, are at this stage mere suggestions.

Too many questions are unanswered re the Green Loop, the tree succession strategy, and the pedestrian walkways. The Green Loop is an independent plan not fully vetted and developed to be part of another plan.

The Plan is not ready for review by the City Council.

2. Open Space A major characteristic of the SPB is its open space and simplicity-it is made for walking, talking, reading, and meditation. The Plan with its additional uses, a major bike route, tree removals, insertion of evergreens, street closures, and consolidations of walkways, would threaten the open space and simplicity of the SPB. Some of these items would be okay, not all of them. To a certain extent this planning process is the equivalent of throwing ideas at a wall to see what sticks and might be possible. The planners and consultants do not have solid answers to the many questions raised by the Plan.

3. Tree Canopy A critical characteristic, the deciduous tree canopy in five rows of trees, will be devastated by the tree succession strategy if adopted. Too many trees will be lost, even if it is over time. And there is no reason to introduce evergreens to the mix of trees. Let's keep it all deciduous. We need shade in the summer and light in the winter. Tree loss should be minimized to reduce climate change and avoid heat islands. The SPB is unique in its reliance on deciduous trees-let's keep it that way. The tree strategy treats the two districts differently, the University District loses the rows of tree concept in exchange for a hodge podge design to accommodate additional uses and furniture and event spaces, while the Cultural District has rows of trees, but many trees are taken out, too many. The rows should be maintained throughout the SPB.

4. Green Loop/Borders The Green Loop must not intrude within the historic boundaries of the park. Bike lanes must stay in the streets. As a long time bike rider and commuter (1972-present) I strongly believe that the bike ways should be

separated, and place as two independent one-way bike lanes on the two N-S one-way Park Avenue streets. Two one way bike ways would reduce dramatically major peds/bike conflicts inherent in the current Plan. The bikeways deserve more input from bike users and from pedestrians, it should be separated from the Plan process.

The final Plan should keep border sidewalks to demarcate the historic border and accommodate alternative pedestrian-priority paths for the park.

I like the DNA suggestion that a multi-day on-site survey be undertaken of preferences of pedestrians, especially local residents/workers who cross the park daily, regarding the use of one-street versus 2 streets. This survey should be conducted over the course of multiple days by PBOT, but after the COVID closures are finished and PSU reopens. Offices are largely empty now, I know mine is.

5 Street Closures. With PBOT's proposal for more street closures, I suggest separating the Green Loop configuration and the street closures/traffic issues from the Plan. These traffic decisions will change plans relative to the SPB, and should precede the Plan.

6. Unify SPB The Plan should not create two distinct parks, which the draft currently does. All 12 blocks were originally conceived as a single entity, with unifying concepts of 5 rows of several varieties of deciduous trees in axial alignment and long allée views as unifying principals. Except as modified by the Green Loop/Street Closure work, the Plan should retain cross streets and borders as defining characteristics too.

The existing long, simple benches also unify the Cultural and University blocks. Replacements should be simple too and placed throughout to maintain unity. And care must be taken to avoid cluttering this historic, simple, unifying design with too much stuff.

The "Draft Referred Plan" has been presented for proposed revisions to the South Park Blocks, along with a nomination to the National Register of Historic Places to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in Salem. These two efforts seem to me not to be compatible. Either the Park's primary historic elements are respected intact in a new nomination, or they are abandoned for an entirely new design. The plans presented are for an entirely new design, after the extant historic elements are proposed for removal.

Of the 12 blocks comprising the South Park Blocks, six (The University District) to the south, have already been seriously compromised when PSU took them over as a central part of its campus. At that time, all the original North to South (N/S) central paths were removed and the original deciduous tree "allee" concept (planted in 1877) was replaced by more modern, multi-purposed open spaces-- all different in concept from each other. The original simplicity of a "Cathedral of Trees" concept did not remain on the ground, when its original central walkways were removed and when shrubbery was planted, blocking the N/S views. The present Draft Plan retains these PSU revisions, but adds a new bike Greenway (12'-6" wide) along the entire west side (at Park Avenue West) of the six block University District, dividing the buildings from their existing free access to the park. This bike freeway seems to be the backbone of all the proposed changes.

The other six blocks to the north (The Cultural District) at present retain their original allee concept (a green lawn with five rows of deciduous trees (4 allees/5 rows of trees), with two N/S pedestrian paths at each side of the central row. A

more open allee developed in time at the Portland Art Museum (PAM), where the equestrian statue of Theodore Roosevelt is located. The new Draft Plan replaces this concept with one central pedestrian path and two rows of trees to each side, much more widely spaced, with larger trees in the middle and smaller ones at the perimeter. The original allee design of the park, the Cathedral of Trees, tall and closely spaced, is totally gone in the new Draft Plan.

There are four significant features of the Draft Plan for the six northerly South Park Blocks. (1) There is a significant addition with a new (30'-6"wide) bike freeway (Greenway) at the south side of the Park Blocks. The bike freeway includes two parallel bike lanes flanked by planters at each side, penetrated only at street intersections and at some mid-block locations. (2) In the Draft Plan ALL the trees in the South Park Blocks are eventually removed and replaced with new trees, which differ in size, species and spacing. (3) The apparent width (W curb to E curb) of the Park Blocks is reduced from 124 ft. (W/E) by inserting part of the bike Greenway and by removing in the process many thousand sq. ft. of lawn. Originally, the dimensions of the Park Blocks were thought to be 100 ft. x 200 ft. (or one-half of a city block). At Salmon Street, the existing E/W width of the Arlington Club, to the Park's north, is 100 ft. with 50 ft. R.O.W. at each side and gives evidence to this. The width of the Park Blocks was further recorded in 1903 at 109' (by J. Olmsted), and expanded in the 1980s to its present 124 ft. Yet, this plan proposes to REDUCE the width of the park, presumably to accommodate the bike freeway at its western border. (4) With the 30'-6" Greenway barrier at its front door, access to the PAM is severely restricted, both for car unloading and pedestrian entry (not to mention fire truck access). The PAM now has been encircled by the Rose Lane (bikes, etc.) Project (to the south), light rail (to the west), a pedestrian path (to the north) on vacated Madison St., and now the Greenway barrier (to the west) on West Park Street. While the PAM is the essence of the "Cultural District," this plan, on the contrary, belittles its presence and further hampers its continued presence on the South Park Blocks.

In 1903 famous park planner John Charles Olmsted from Brookline, MA presented Portland with its first Parks Plan. In his final Plan, he commented that our Park Blocks "correspond closely in effect to Commonwealth Avenue in Boston" (planted a few years earlier than Portland's Park Blocks)-- in essence, a green lawn with parallel allees of deciduous trees. With the proposed changes to the South Park Blocks, all similarity between the still existing Commonwealth Avenue and Portland's South Park Blocks will cease to exist. The proposed changes significantly alter the character and use of the Park Blocks. Originally, the Blocks were for pedestrian passage and use, simple in concept and innately peaceful. The new plan includes every possible use, including the dominating hustle of a bike highway and multi-activity oriented use, all seemingly cluttered, such that listing them on the National Register of Historic Places after all historic qualities are removed seems hard to fathom. Commonwealth Avenue is listed on the National Register, but WITHOUT changing its basic planning concept.

I'm writing to urge you to maintain the extant tree canopy as part of any plan for reinvisioning the South Park Blocks. These are a critical asset in our efforts to tackle climate change. And, mature elms are a rare and special thing indeed.

Testimony to the Combined Design and Landmarks Commission July 14th meeting pertaining to the South Park Blocks Master Plan.

I am a member of the Downtown Neighborhood Association, and the Park Blocks are my back yard.

The adoption of a South Park Blocks Master Plan is premature and out of sequence with other important planning processes. The South Park Blocks nomination for historic designation has been submitted to the Oregon Historic Preservation Office. If approved there will be documented important features that should be incorporated into any long-term Park Blocks Master Plan.

Since there are currently not approved budget dollars to actually implement any significant changes to the existing park blocks there is no reason the planning process cannot be paused until the outcome of the Historic nomination process is completed.

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To Members of the Design Commission and Landmarks Commission,

I am here today to support the South Park Blocks Master Plan. The experience of being on the Master Plan Community Advisory Committee has been rewarding and helpful to my work. Through the committee, I was able to listen to a wide array of stakeholders who interact with the South Park Blocks in various ways. The committee included representatives from the Portland Art Museum, Oregon Historic Society, Portland 5, Portland State University, Portland Farmers Market, residents, students and Portland citizens. We were also able to interact with Portland Parks, Portland Bureau of Transportation and Mayer/Reed. This assembly was excellent.

For Green Loop, it was important to understand the uses of the Park Blocks, such as the Portland Farmers Market and accommodating school buses for the Art Museum and Portland'5. Relationships formed in the committee led to opportunities to learn more outside of the committee - I was able to volunteer at the Portland Farmers Market and understand how Green Loop would need to interact with this event including vendor loadouts, market entrances and chef concierge areas. Working with everyone, we came to a consensus on Green Loop alignment that reflected the needs and visions of everyone - an alignment on the west side of the park. This recommendation is being vetted through the public and is looking like it has consensus. As a result of this work, this is the alignment that I will be advocating for with PBOT and the public.

Recently, I have been informed that the Downtown Neighborhood Association does not approve of the Master Plan and has submitted a historic nomination for the South Park Blocks. It is unfortunate that the DNA has not taken advantage of the opportunity they had as a member of the Community Advisory Committee to listen to the voices in the room and work together through the process to develop a nomination that represented that combined vision. It is very troubling to me that the DNA has developed this nomination without the inclusion of any other committee members or Portland Parks. As far as I know, no one has seen the actual nomination - including Parks. I am very disappointed in this unilateral action that discards all of the work and public input that we have put into this plan. This historic nomination did not need to precede the Master Plan, nor should it had. The process was an opportunity to discover the features and functions of the South Park Blocks that we all value and prioritize that could be included in a nomination.

I support an inclusive and representative committee that includes key stakeholders from the public, private sector and the City of Portland to properly nominate the Park Blocks in the future.

I'd like to thank Barbara Hart, Tate White and Portland Parks for their comprehensive process to develop this plan. Thank you.

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## **COMMENTS FROM THE DNA ON THE MAY 2020 SOUTH PARK BLOCKS MASTER PLAN**

### **I. TIMELINE and its history (developer benefit-funding driven)**

- **Recommendation:** Need to pause the South Park Blocks (SPB) master plan (MP) for the SPB historic nomination to proceed to adoption and to allow the historic nomination process to precede any final draft of MP.
- CC2035 priorities do *not* include a MP—CC2035 calls for tree succession planning, planning with PSU, and a SPB historic nomination.
- Required affordable housing benefit was to be completed or nearing completion before beginning the MP (That quarter block lot is now for sale).
- 2016 land use document notes that the *applicant* (funding source for the MP) “*previously proposed listing the Park Blocks on the National Register of Historic Places; however, Portland Parks and Recreation (PP&R) has [had] an agreement in place with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to list the Park Blocks in the National Register of Historic Places by 2020 and elected to pursue this listing on their own.*” (LU 15-281248 DZM MS – Broadway Tower, April 21, 2016; p.18)
- Why is the nomination not already completed? Why was research for a nomination not in the scope of work for the MP historic consultant? The superficial “Existing Conditions Report” accompanying the MP does not mention an important archeological find in the 1400 block. Nor is the fact the blocks have never been tilled, potentially making them archeologically sensitive. In fact, this find may qualify as satisfying Department of Interior Criterion D, indicating the SPB may satisfy 3 of the 4 Department of Interior criteria. Satisfying only 1 criterion is required for a successful nomination. That indicates how valuable the park blocks are historically.
- A past PP&R director noted at a public hearing the historic nomination should precede the MP so the defining characteristics could be identified and respected/protected.

### **II. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS ON MP DRAFT, MAY 2020:**

The framework for the following comments is largely based on the historic features identified so far.

#### **HISTORIC FEATURES TO BE RESPECTED (OR SHPO indicates SPB may be eligible for 3 out of 4 criteria.)**

- Open Space – flexible and adaptive – for the enjoyment of all
- 5 Rows of Deciduous trees – not evergreen – in ordered ranks & axial alignment
- Restrained and refined simplicity
- Defined boundaries

#### **OPEN SPACE**

- Promenade park with long views and open space
  - Existed since the SPB’s origin design, in the 1870’s. (NOTE: the blocks also appear in early 1850’s map of Portland.)
  - Notable that SPB has resisted development pressures until now, including protection by PSU president in 1970’s from overdevelopment when he stressed the critical goal of maintaining the basic integrity of the historic park and warned against overdeveloping this “*haven in the heart of the metropolis.*”
- No to PSU’s replacing the natural canopy with a built canopy on Block 4.
  - Supporting structures should go through transparent Land Use process.
  - Lack of a transparent process is apparent with the addition of this PSU-proposed structure/supporting structures, highlighted in the MP draft.



- Does not respect the historic feature of long views created by 5 rows in ordered ranks of canopy trees.
- Open space does not preclude additional properly scaled art pieces or additional temporary events, especially more diverse cultural expressions. Graduations, student events and farmers markets are compatible with open space.
- Evergreens shrink visual open space by restricting open views from building to building
  - SPB is a narrow half block park – the half block width cannot accommodate evergreens.
  - Evergreens clutter rather than protect the restrained simplicity of historic design
  - Evergreens create permanent shade
  - Act as a visual wall, cluttering and obstructing the open space and framing architecture

**BORDERS** – preserve open access for pedestrians

- Green Loop should not encroach inside historic park's visual and physical boundaries – keep entirely in the street(s.)
- Evergreens along borders (PSU blocks) restrict/limit/narrow open spaces and restrict open views of framing architecture.
- Keep border sidewalks to demarcate the historic border and accommodate alternative pedestrian-priority paths for the park.
- Border planters restrict free access for pedestrians.
- Bollards or bike-unfriendly curbs rather than planters or other incompatible plantings used to separate cyclists from pedestrians might be preferable.
- Too many additional planters are costly and not sustainable in terms of maintenance.
- For PSU blocks, note PSU is not known for doing a good job on beds/planters; better with grassy areas.
- Retain middle row and rose planters as they currently exist in the Cultural District (maintained largely by Friends of SouthPark Blocks).

**TREES AND CANOPY**

- Intentional use of deciduous, not coniferous evergreens (respecting historic design characteristic).
- Loss of one row of trees along the middle of each block does not respect historic design of 5 rows (too many trees taken out in strategic sites throughout). This loss eliminates entirely one canopied allée/long view of the historic design.
- Global warming – loss of so many trees is environmentally unfriendly – replace diseased elms with tall tree species in the 3 middle rows and mid-tall and understory species along edges – This tree plan is reminiscent of Brazilian deforestation!
- Less trees increases heat island effect.
- Negative health impact to residents and workers with excessive tree loss – well documented.
- Deciduous trees provide shade in summer, sun in winter, color in fall.
- *SPB is the only park in Portland without evergreen*, which is notable – also is one of a very few parks in the US with this simple classical design – also notable.

**RESTRAINED SIMPLICITY: ALLÉES – AXIAL** view/alignment, ordered ranks.

- PSU overreach – PSU was on TAC (technical advisory committee) so the reasons for PSU changes were never explained to CAC (citizen advisory committee).
- No to hardscape increase in all northern Cultural District blocks and University District (blocks 2,3,4,).

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- Grass dividing two long, narrow promenade-allées are of the historic design, so no a single wide sidewalk proposed in the draft MP.
- Increased hardscape is less sustainable and contributes to global warming.
- Large hardscapes create heat islands, and downtown needs this area to not add to that problem.
- 5 historic rows of trees – maintain this throughout to protect the historic long axial views.
- Retain tall trees in rows 2, 3, 4. Mix of mid-size and small varieties on edges would be okay.
- Retain 2 principal, divided, canopied promenades in center of the Cultural District blocks.
  - A pedestrian safety feature providing an alternate route and can reduce conflicts.
  - Respects both history and the beauty of the park's simplicity of design.
  - All divided paths on blocks 7 through 12 are of historic design significance.

#### MAIN STREET

- Temporary vs. permanent closure: A Portland5-programmed amphitheater makes permanent closing easier to support but would want guarantees:
  - Portland5 programming should be **free** (put language in Council-approved ordinance for that).
  - Side passageways remain (stairs and ramp).
    - Main is a principal pedestrian gateway for SPB to/from downtown.
    - Keep access open 24/7 and welcoming (put in Council ordinance).
  - Retain green planters on sides to soften hardscape.
  - No permanent structures overhead (open air) between Schnitzer and Portland5 building. Temporary structure is okay.
- Is park block portion of the street too narrow for public art in middle island? Would it mean less space for Wednesday Farmers Market (top priority)?

#### MADISON PLAZA – permanent closure – yes, DNA supports

- Turn plaza art feature over to PAM (Portland Art Museum) for temporary art curation with goal of expanding representation of minority cultures.
  - Create a reason to come repeatedly (i.e., destination) with *temporary*, curated ethnic art works.
  - Have more opportunities to learn about different ethnicities of city if temporary public art.
- No new architectural/art feature should compete with PAM and its new architecture.
- Retain simplicity to maximize flexibility of space as a programmable plaza (for PAM, OHS, Farmers Markets and other income streams, i.e. weddings, small festivals/events).
- Identification of Madison as a street separating the park blocks is part of the historic design so protect those “street” characteristics.

#### UNIFY PARK BLOCKS RATHER THAN DIVIDE THEM

- The master plan should *not* create two distinct parks, which the draft currently does. All 12 blocks were originally conceived as a single entity, with unifying concepts of 5 rows of several varieties of deciduous trees in axial alignment and long allée views as unifying principals. Retain cross streets and borders as defining characteristics too.
- The existing long, simple benches also unify the Cultural and University blocks. Replacements should be simple too and placed throughout to maintain unity.
- Open views (both long and across to adjacent buildings) act as a unifying, simple design feature.
- Avoid cluttering this historic, simple, unifying design.
- Consider including interpretive signage throughout the park to tell the story of the SPB.



#### LIGHTING

- Retain “historic” (copies of) existing lighting fixtures throughout – they act as a unifying design feature.
- Accommodate needs for electrical outlets by homeless populations.
- Any new lighting/art features should not contribute to the pollution of “night sky” for birds or people.

#### SEATING

- Question the use of “communal” tables.
  - Tables become beds for homeless in the daytime and nighttime.
  - Assume social distancing may no longer be a needed, but health should be a consideration in design. Picnics can attract rats, especially in dense urban settings.
- Keep the concept of linear seating as a unifying element. Avoid clutter as a design feature.

#### ROSES AND PLANTINGS

- Keep existing rose beds as a nod to historic rose beds. Favorites of neighbors and visitors (so city tour guides say).
- Keep existing N-S median strip planters with “native” plantings in northern Cultural District blocks.
- No to shrubbery along borders – restricts free flow, views and priority ease of access by pedestrians; doesn’t respect pedestrian priority open space concept.
- Do not use grasses or other plantings incompatible with more classic view of native understory plants in boundary or mid-block planters.
- Yes to Native American’s designing the two large PSU triangle block planters (block 5). Allow for historic/explanatory markers. PSU must guarantee and budget for maintenance.

#### **III. GREEN LOOP**

- Must not intrude within the historic boundaries of the park. Bike lanes must stay in the street(s).
- Suggest separating from the MP process the decision on whether both bike lanes along the northern 6 blocks are on one street or are two independent one-way bike lanes on the two N-S one-way Park Avenue streets. As a separate question, this should be thoroughly vetted with the public. This is an important decision that should not be part of this master plan.
- Suggest a multi-day on-site survey of preferences of pedestrians, especially local residents/workers who cross the park daily, regarding the use of one-street versus 2 streets. This survey should be conducted over the course of multiple days by PBOT, but after the COVID closures are finished and the city begins to recover (offices are largely empty now).

APPROVED BY DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION BOARD, June 23,

Walter Weyler  
Chair, DNA Board



July 14, 2020



## To The Design and Historic Landmarks Commissions:

Today the Parks Board reviewed and approved this letter of support for the South Park Blocks Plan.

*Board Members*

*Paul Agrimis, Chair*

*Bonnie Gee Yosick, Vice Chair*

*Kendall Clawson*

*Michelle Dedeo*

*Mike Elliott*

*Patricia Frobes*

*Jenny Glass*

*Katy Holland*

*Ian Jaquiss*

*Tamara Layden*

*Jim Owens*

*Gladys Ruiz*

*Paddy Tillett*

*Erin Zollenkopf*

*Randy Gragg, Ex-Officio*

*Lorena Nascimento, Ex-Officio*

*Lee Novak, Ex-Officio*

**Project Purpose:** The South Park Blocks Plan is in the third stage of refinement prior to seeking City approval. A distinctive feature of the plan is inclusion of part of the 'Green Loop', a succession of linked green spaces along a six-mile ring through Downtown and the Central Eastside, crossing the Willamette at Broadway Bridge and Tilikum Crossing. The purpose is to provide a safe and pleasing route for recreational walkers and bicyclists. This would extend some assets enjoyed on the north and south Park Blocks to the Eastside. The concept of the Green Loop is included in the approved Central City 2035 Plan and was endorsed by the Parks Board. Other routes are available for those wishing to move more briskly: regular sidewalks and crossings for pedestrians, dedicated lanes like those on SW Broadway for bicyclists.

**Historical Context:** The functions and designs of the Park Blocks have evolved with the city, serving variously as a fire break, grazing land, gardens, semi-formal park, festival ground, farmers market, university campus and forecourt to the Cultural District. The South Park Blocks have responded with numerous design changes to meet the needs of each era. This is in sharp contrast to places that have been designed by one hand as were, for example, the Lawrence Halprin series of spaces beginning with the 'Source' fountain near SW Lincoln Street

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and terminating with the Keller (formerly Forecourt) Fountain west of the Keller Auditorium.

**Current and Future Uses:** While many of the uses accommodated in the South Park Blocks continue as valued assets, many of the trees are nearing the ends of their lives. Succession plantings of young trees are proposed so that they can achieve a degree of maturity before their seniors succumb. The function of the more northerly blocks as forecourt to the Cultural District was strengthened with expansion of the Oregon Historical Society and construction of the Performing Arts Center. The significance of this space will increase as Portland Art Museum expansion proceeds and Madison Street is freed of vehicular traffic. The South Park Blocks Plan seeks to reconcile all these uses with one-another, and with providing continuity in the Green Loop along the west edge of the Park Blocks.

**Treasured Heritage:** The South Park Blocks are among Portland's most valued features, providing places of quiet contemplation and respite for much of the central city. Since the 1880s, blocks bordering them have evolved dramatically, with early homes being replaced with churches, museums, theaters, and a major university. Through many of the blocks, lines of stately trees have survived largely intact, and are interspersed with memorial statues and public art. Only the blocks south of Market Street have been comprehensively redesigned to fulfill University functions. The rest have evolved more as a tradition rooted in the history of linear urban parks.

The Parks Board believes that the goals of preservation and further evolution are compatible—particularly when it comes to the mobility around them. Horses and buggies gave way to cars and buses and, now with the Green Loop, can give way to bicycles, strollers and joggers. Improvements on SW Broadway make it a more safe and efficient path for sporting and commuting cyclists, SW Park can easily serve a mix of slower moving pedestrians and cyclists, either

separated or, as is often the case in European cities, freely mixing in so-called “universal streets.”

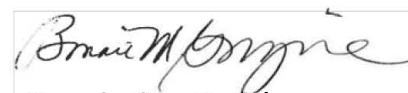
The Parks Board has not yet had an opportunity to study the nomination of the South Park Blocks to the National Register. This nomination in no way should preclude changes in SW Ninth and Park Avenues to meet changing needs and goals of the city.

Recommendation: The Parks Board supports the South Park Blocks Plan as currently presented. In particular, we recognize the importance of the Green Loop in extending inner-city recreational opportunities to the east side of the river, of increasing safe and enjoyable non-vehicular access across the Willamette, and of preparing for the eventual replacement of mature trees throughout the South Park Blocks.

Sincerely,



Paul Agrimis



Bonnie Gee-Yosick