



February 8, 2017

Mayor Ted Wheeler
Commissioner Amanda Fritz
Portland Parks and Recreation Director Mike Abbate

Re: Upcoming budget decisions for the Portland Parks and Recreation (PP&R) budget that impact the Hosford Abernethy Neighborhood District (HAND).

Dear Honorable Mayor Wheeler, Commissioner Fritz, and PP&R Director Abbate:

What does it mean to be the City of Roses with no roses?

By defunding the horticulturist and maintenance of the Ladd's Addition historic rose gardens, which pre-date the International Rose Test Garden, the city will be turning its back on a key element that defines our city and neglecting its responsibility to protect a nationally recognized and character-defining historic designation for the four gardens in Ladd's Addition.

The Portland Rose Festival is a source of pride, contributes to our economy, and brings visitors from all over the world each year to our city. Yes, June can be rainy, but part of the festival experience is visiting the vibrant and well maintained rose gardens spread across the city that are in full bloom just as the parade starts marching.

Neighborhood volunteers, Friends of Ladd's Addition Garden's (FLAG), a 501(c) 3 have worked with city maintenance staff for decades tending the roses in Ladd's Addition, dramatically stretching and leveraging limited city maintenance funds. If this partnership dissolves and the gardens lie fallow, the city will lose an important asset in its portfolio, and a piece of its identity.

We ask that you please consider alternate funding cuts and preserve the rose program.

Budget item: PK 09 Eliminate Maintenance and Horticultural Improvements at Ladd's Rose Garden, (\$96,668)

Unfortunately, since HAND is already parks deficient, there is little else we can offer up in return except to enhance the existing partnerships with PP&R. We have limited recreation amenities, including no community center, no pool, no fountains, no tennis courts, no sanctioned dog park, no skate park, no public restroom and no firm commitment from leaders that anything new is being planned. As HAND becomes increasingly dense and developed, the in-between spaces are disappearing and opportunities to capture amenities are slipping away. It is critical that we protect the few parks and public open spaces we have, and consider streetscapes and street trees as an extension of our parks.

Please review how much revenue in taxes and parks SDCs the city receives from development in HAND and adjacent neighborhoods, the added value received from volunteer efforts, and how much is actually spent here. Can you really justify cutting funding in this area?



We entreat you to maintain the few amenities we have, which provide immense benefit to our neighborhood and the greater city as well:

Elm Tree Monitoring and Infected Tree Removal: The tree canopy in Ladd's Addition is part of a street tree planting plan that is integral in the neighborhood design which was inspired by the City Beautiful movement that swept the country in the late 19th and early 20th century. It has received national register status and a national American Planning Association Award for our community efforts and partnerships as a result. In a strong sense, the neighborhood is a park with houses planted within it. Maintaining a healthy tree canopy and planting plan true to the original design is crucial to the success of this district. Thousands of bicyclists commute daily on Ladd Avenue and Harrison Street and benefit from the shade, filtered air, and green corridor the large canopy provides. As with the roses, neighborhood volunteers, Save Our Elms (SOE), a 501(c) 3 have worked with the city for years helping monitor for disease, inoculate elms, plant new trees and coordinate pruning.

Ladd Circle Maintenance: Gone are the days of annually planted flower beds, but Ladd Circle still holds a charm for children who gleefully run in circles, grownups who come to play music weekly on summer evenings and anyone in search of a place of respite on a sunny day. Keeping the lawn mown, trash picked up, and the bushes trimmed for safety seems like a reasonable ask.

Piccolo Park Maintenance: Our only city playground is an essential spot for youngsters not quite ready for school and their parents to meet up in a car-free, outdoor space. Keeping this space mown and trash free here is vital as well.

If we are mistaken about how many parks resources the city actually spends in the neighborhood, please reach out to us with a menu of options that we can respond to or suggestions for additional volunteer programs and partnerships. Neighbors would like the opportunity to prioritize cuts in order to preserve that which will be hardest to replace and least likely for a volunteer group to manage.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Susan E. Pearce

HAND Chair

Cc: Commissioner Eudaly
Commissioner Fish
Commissioner Saltzman
James Allison – Portland Parks Land Stewardship Division Manager
HAND Board