



May 14, 2015

To: Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction

The Honorable Tobias Reed, Co-Chair

The Honorable Fred Girod, Co-Chair

The Honorable Val Hoyle

The Honorable John Huffman

The Honorable Tina Kotek

The Honorable Greg Smith

The Honorable Peter Courtney

The Honorable Richard Devlin

RE: Support of *Reconnect Forest Park* Project Request

On behalf of nearly 1,000 members of the Oregon Recreation and Park Association (ORPA), including 62 park and recreation agencies as well as professionals, and volunteers, I am pleased to express support for Portland Parks & Recreation's *Reconnect Forest Park* funding request. State financial support is essential to enable Portland Parks & Recreation to improve accessibility and enhance the visitor and user experience at Forest Park and to continue its stewardship of this important natural area and historic park facility that is one of the crown jewels of parks in Oregon.

In addition to our other legislative work, ORPA is always pleased to support legislation that provides resources to local park and recreation providers, especially for facilities as significant as Forest Park. We support Portland's *Reconnect Forest Park* request for several reasons:

Forest Park is a celebrated public park icon that is representative of Portland the entire State of Oregon. It is an important recreational facility for residents in the Portland region, along with the many tourists who visit Forest Park annually. For visitors who never venture beyond Portland, their experience at Forest Park forges their impression of parks in Oregon – including whether or not they are enticed to return or to expand their travels to other state, county, district, or local park and recreation facilities.

Forest Park is an important natural area that provides critical habitat to nearly 200 species and is a component of a much larger regional ecosystem. With such tremendous species diversity, Forest Park is an important ecological resource for the entire state. Funding to design and build a visitor center at Forest Park would greatly enhance the park's ability to serve as an essential educational facility to the region and the entire state and to ensure public understanding of the critical role of the park to Oregon's environment.

ORPA's legislative platform includes supporting "legislation that calls for and funds the formation of partnerships to provide such services [that promote active healthy lifestyles]." The State of Oregon's financial investment in Forest Park's improvement would enable Portland Parks & Recreation to leverage the resources it already is investing and to encourage a broader population of Oregon's residents and visitors to access the park for recreational purposes and reap the companion health benefits thereof.

The State of Oregon's investment in the *Reconnect Forest Park* project represents an excellent opportunity for the state to support this amazing urban natural area and to ensure its access and relevance to a broad population. ORPA strongly encourages the Subcommittee to approve Portland Parks & Recreation's *Reconnect Forest Park* funding request.

Thank you for your consideration, and please feel free to contact me or Cindy Robert, ORPA's lobbyist, if we may offer any additional information to the Committee.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Redman, Executive Director



contaminants; and assess any necessary remediation and state and federal permitting requirements.

- Local Zoning and Permitting – Identify local requirements for stormwater treatment, environmental zone, urban forestry.
- Structural – Determine the load required to support a building at the site.
- Land Survey – Determine the topography of the site, establish site boundaries and other land features.

**Phase 4: Design/Engineering/Permitting**

**\$1,800,000**

Status: Funding sought through Legislature

To include:

- Professional design consultant services
- Land use and building permit fees
- Contracting procurement process services

**Phase 5: Building & Site Improvements Costs**

**\$9,700,000**

(\$7,300,000 Visitor Center + \$2,400,000 Site = \$9,700,000)

Status: Funding source to be determined

To include facility and site construction work of:

- 10,000 square foot visitor center
- Parking for approximately 40 cars with a bus turn-around
- Public restrooms and drinking fountain
- An ADA accessible trail into Forest Park
- An interpretive overlook

**Total Project Cost (Phases 1-5)**

**~\$12,600,000**

## RECONNECT FOREST PARK

Funding an Entrance to Forest Park

### Contacts:

#### Portland Parks & Recreation

Mike Abbate, Director

[director.abbate@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:director.abbate@portlandoregon.gov)

#### Forest Park Conservancy

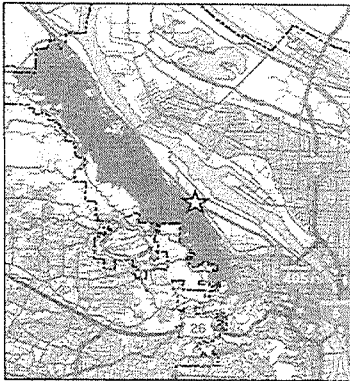
Renee Myers, Executive Director

[renee@forestparkconservancy.org](mailto:renee@forestparkconservancy.org)

#### Portland Government Relations

Elizabeth Edwards, Senior Associate

[elizabeth.edwards@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:elizabeth.edwards@portlandoregon.gov)



Site for proposed entry point

Forest Park is one of the largest forested natural areas within city limits in the country. The park has over 5,000 wooded acres and provides tremendous ecological, recreational and health benefits for the region. However, Forest Park lacks a recognizable entry point.

An entrance was identified as a need in the Forest Park Natural Resources Management Plan (NRMP), adopted by City Council in 1995. The NRMP recommends, among other things, the development of a regional trailhead that would include parking, seasonal restrooms, a drinking fountain and a multi-use, ADA accessible trail to connect with Leif Erikson and Fire Lane I.

The acquisition of a key piece of property at the intersection of NW Yeon/Hwy 30 and NW Kittridge affords an opportunity to create the Entrance long envisioned for the park. Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) purchased the former brownfield property and is now poised for the next phase, a feasibility study to identify site opportunities and constraints.

The development of the Entrance presents both opportunities and challenges due to its steep slopes, hillside seeps, and environmental zoning. A feasibility study is critically important to inform PP&R on permitting and construction requirements, and costs. Included in the feasibility study are numerous technical studies, a concept plan and cost estimates.

Following the scope developed under the feasibility study, the next phases will include detailed design development, permitting and project development.

### Overview of Project Phases and Estimated Costs (using 2014 dollars)

<b>Phase 1: Acquisition</b>	<b>\$527,000</b>
Status: Completed using Metro Local Share funds	
<b>Phase 2: Brownfield Cleanup. Designated NFA by DEQ.</b>	<b>\$0</b>
Status: Completed by previous owners	
<b>Phase 3: Feasibility Study and Survey</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>
Status: Funding sought through Legislature	

To include the following studies:

- Roadway and Traffic – Determine the location of the driveway and parking lot, and assess required right-of-way improvements.
- Geotechnical – Investigate the physical properties of the site including soil suitability for improvements, erosion, slopes, geology and location of water seeps and wetlands.
- Environmental – Identify water resources; perform wetland delineations; identify sensitive, threatened and/or endangered species; locate possible

RECONNECT FOREST PARK

*Mitch Greenlick*

Representative Mitch Greenlick

*Elizabeth Steiner Hayward*

Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward

*Lew Fredeick*

Representative Lew Fredeick

*Chip Shields*

Senator Chip Shields

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*Jennifer Williamson*

Representative Jennifer Williamson

*Michael Dembrow*

Senator Michael Dembrow

*Ginny Burdick*

Senator Ginny Burdick

*Rob Nosse*

Representative Rob Nosse

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## RECONNECT FOREST PARK

March 30, 2015

The Honorable Fred Girod, Co-Chair  
The Honorable Tobias Read, Co-Chair  
Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction  
900 Court St NE, Hearing Room F  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs Girod and Read and Members of the Committee:

We write in support of funding for a visitor center and ADA accessible trailhead at Forest Park, one of the largest forested natural areas within city limits in the country.

Forest Park has over 5,100 wooded acres, 80 miles of trail, more than 112 bird and 62 mammal species, and almost half a million annual visitors. The park serves as a natural air purifier, water collector, and erosion controller and provides tremendous ecological, recreational and health benefits for the region. However, Forest Park suffers from the lack of a recognizable entry point.

Developing a brownfield property adjacent to the Park with a visitor center, an ADA accessible trail, and a parking lot with sufficient space for a school bus to turn-around would increase access to more Oregonians of all ages, abilities and backgrounds. Presently there is only a quarter mile of ADA accessible trail and limited opportunities for public education and outreach.

The City of Portland is making broad investments in Forest Park to fight invasive species and repair critical infrastructure to help ensure the ongoing health and safety of park facilities. This request for state funds would help conduct a feasibility study and initial designs, permitting and engineering to redevelop the brownfield site. A feasibility study to identify site opportunities and constraints is critically important to the development of the visitor center and trailhead. Design, permitting and engineering costs bring the project to shovel ready.

For many years citizens and stakeholders have called for a major investment in the future of Forest Park. With a holistic look at ecology, recreation and access, this is a unique opportunity to make a significant improvement to this regional asset - a legacy that will be passed down to succeeding generations of Oregonians.

We, the undersigned, urge your support for investing in this unique and important asset: Forest Park.

THE  
TRUST  
for  
PUBLIC  
LAND



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May 15, 2015

Senator Fred Girod, Co-Chair  
Representative Tobias Read, Co-Chair  
Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction  
900 Court Street NE, HR F  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs Girod and Read:

I am writing to express The Trust for Public Land's support of state funding for an entrance to Forest Park. This park is unique in Oregon and the nation, with over 5,200 wooded acres, 75 miles of trails, 100 species of birds and 45 mammal species. Nestled in-between Tryon Creek State Park and a forested corridor that extends all the way to the Oregon coast, Forest Park is a critically important ecological resource that cleans our air and water and provides recreational and health benefits for the region.

Despite its size, Forest Park can be difficult to access. Presently, there is only one quarter mile of ADA accessible trail and limited opportunities for public education and outreach. There is no parking lot where a school bus can come in and turn around. To address these access and outreach challenges, the City of Portland acquired a former industrial brownfield property that will be the site of a nature center, ADA accessible trailhead, and parking lot. The next steps involve site planning, design, engineering and permitting.

We support state funding for these next steps to bring the project to "shovel ready." Once built, the entrance to Forest Park will be a significant regional asset that will make the outdoors accessible to a growing population of Oregonians. I urge you to allocate funding toward an entrance to Forest Park.

Sincerely,



Nelson Mathews  
Oregon State Director  
The Trust for Public Land

## RECONNECT FOREST PARK

Funding an Entrance to Forest Park, an Opportunity of Statewide Significance

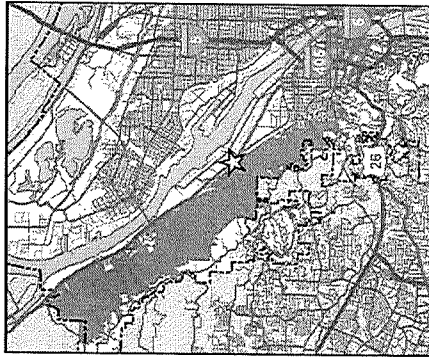
## OVERVIEW OF PROJECT PHASES AND ESTIMATED COSTS

**F**orest Park is the largest forested natural area within city limits in the country. This forest within a city is part of a wildlife corridor that extends west to the Oregon coast, and south to Tryon Creek State Park. The Park is comprised of approximately 5,200 forested acres and provides tremendous ecological, recreational and health benefits for the entire region. Over 100 species of birds and 45 mammals call Forest Park home. As the Portland region's premier outdoor escape, almost a half million visitors flock annually to the Park to enjoy recreation and respite.

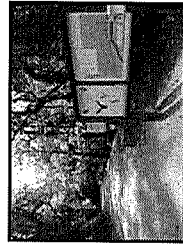
The City of Portland is embarking on a comprehensive, concentrated effort in Forest Park over the next ten years to build a continued legacy for future generations. Portland, through public and private money, is investing millions of dollars to fight invasive species, rebuild failing infrastructure and develop a visitor center with ADA accessible trailhead.

Despite the size and acclaim of Forest Park, there is no main entrance. There is no parking lot where a school bus can easily access the park. There is no nature center where visitors are welcomed, oriented to the Park, and invited to learn about the diverse ecology and history of this resource. There are too few ADA accessible trails. This wonderful public asset is not currently accessible to all Oregonians.

An entrance to Forest Park would create the opportunity for increased access to this unique resource for Oregonians and tourists alike. The land for the project, a former brownfield site, has already been acquired with local share monies from the 2006 Metro bond measure. The next steps are a topographic survey and creation of a site Master Plan, followed by design, engineering and permitting. These next steps will bring the project to "shovel ready" status.



Site for proposed entry point



### Phase 1: Acquisition

Status: Completed using Metro Local Share funds

\$527,000

### Phase 2: Brownfield Cleanup. Designated No Further Action (NFA) by DEQ.

Status: Completed by previous owners

\$0

### Phase 3: Survey and Site Planning

Status: Funding sought through Oregon Legislature

\$500,000

To include:

- Studies on geotechnical and environmental parameters
- Infrastructure needs and impacts related to transportation, water and sewer
- Topographic survey
- Develop site Master Plan

### Phase 4: Design/Engineering/Permitting

Status: Funding sought through Oregon Legislature

\$1,800,000

To include:

- Professional design consultant services
- Land use and building permit fees
- Contracting procurement process services

### Phase 5: Building & Site Improvements Costs

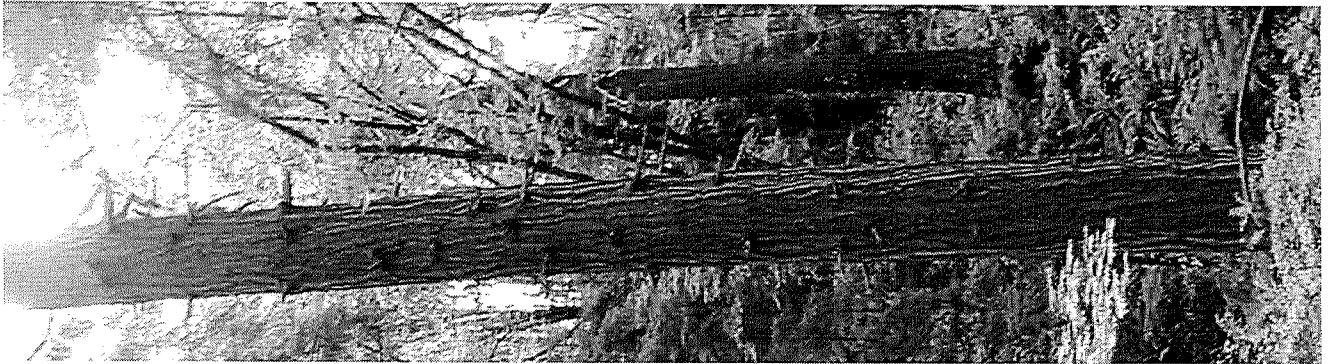
Status: Funding source to be determined

TBD

To include construction of:

- Nature center
- Parking with sufficient space for a bus turn-around
- Public restrooms and drinking fountain
- ADA accessible trail into Forest Park

**Total State funding request: \$2,300,000**



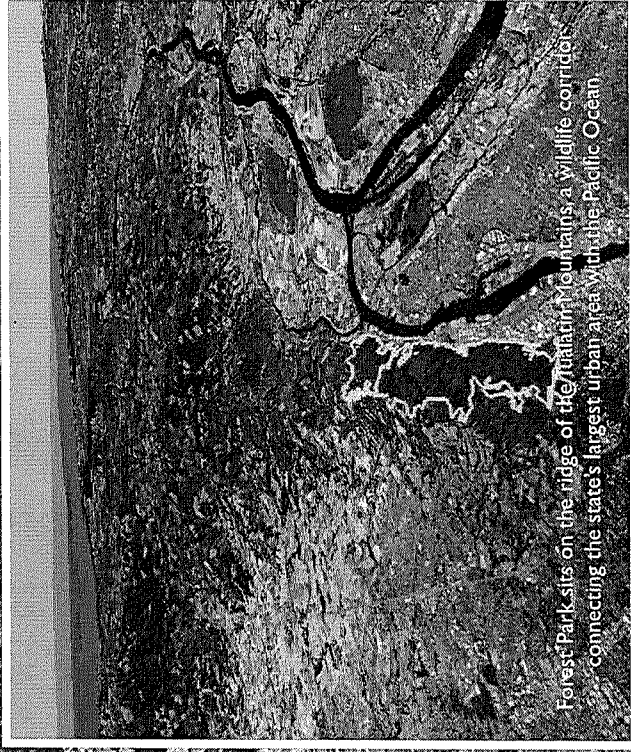
## Forest Park by the numbers:

- **475,000** approximate annual visitors
- **5,172** total acreage; the largest forested park within a city limit
- **200** native species of trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants, including many considered rare in the Portland Metro area
- **100** species of birds, **45** mammals and over **400** invertebrates call Forest Park home
- **75** miles of trail:
  - ◊ All open for hiking, running and walking
  - ◊ **28** miles open for cycling
  - ◊ **25** miles open for horseback riding
- **48** access points and **21** trailheads, but no formal entrance or visitor's center
- **11** subwatersheds with unpiped streams provide cold, clean water to the Willamette River

## Did you know?

- Forest Park extends 7.5 linear miles over the Tualatin Mountain Range and is a critical component of a wildlife corridor that extends to the Oregon Coast and Tryon Creek State Forest.
- Forest Park has two National Scenic Trails: Lower Macleay and Wildwood Trails.
- You can hike the entire length of Forest Park on the Wildwood Trail, which extends 30 total miles.
- 1/3 of the birds found in Forest Park are considered Special Status Species—birds identified as being important regionally and statewide for protection and conservation.
- Forest Park is home to the great and small. One of the world's smallest owls, the Northwest pygmy owl, and the largest woodpecker, the pileated woodpecker, both live year-round in the park.

# Reconnect Forest Park



Forest Park sits on the ridge of the Tualatin Mountains, a wildlife corridor connecting the state's largest urban area with the Pacific Ocean

## CONTACTS:

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 503-823-5379

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**PORTLAND  
PARKS & RECREATION**  
 Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland

May 13, 2015