

Submitter: Kim Larson

On Behalf
Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Capital
Construction

Measure: SB5701

Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Holvey, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kim and I am a resident of St. Johns in Portland, OR. I have lived in the area since 2017. I am urging you to pass the funding request for \$750,000 to improve safety and access at George Park in Portland's St. Johns neighborhood.

I am urging you to pass SB 5701, which includes \$750,000 in funding to improve safety and access at George Park in Portland's St. Johns' neighborhood.

George Park is within walking distance of 4 schools in the neighborhood, but despite it being centrally located in an area with a lot of youth and families, this 2-acre green space severely lacks infrastructure that would promote more positive usage of the space. Students at Roosevelt High School and George Middle School pass this park every day on the way to-and-from school and it has been deemed a priority route through the Portland Bureau of Transportation's Safe Routes to School Program.

I walk my dogs to George Park every day, sometimes multiple times a day. I walk through it to get to Daydreamer Coffee, a local LGBT space and a lifeline to the community of folks like me. I know neighbors along our entire route to George Park, we say hi, and catch up on what's going on in the neighborhood. The Kidz Outside event in August the best thing that has happened in that park in years, but it shouldn't be the only good thing that happens there. I don't go there at night because the lighting is poor, and the trash cans are inaccessible to those of us who can't deviate from the sidewalk. Tire marks from the Parks & Rec trucks cut trenches through the muddy grass when they collect the bags, making it feel and look as neglected as it is. There is one bench and one picnic table at the playground, effectively making it a place where only one group of people can be at a time. If it's occupied by teenagers or elderly folks from Assumption Village, we keep walking to not intrude. There is enough space and enough interest for George Park to be a treasured part of the community, it just needs your investment too.

St Johns is one of the most diverse neighborhoods in Oregon. For 5 years our community has been submitting input on building a new future for this forgotten park. It has often been one of the most overlooked areas in the state. These investments will bring more life into St. Johns, and set a foundation for a more joyful and more connected North Portland for decades to come.

Thank you,
Kim