

Co-Chair Nosse, Co-Chair Girod, and members of the Committee,

My name is Helen Ying, and I serve as Board Chair of Lan Su Chinese Garden.

For many visitors, stepping through the Garden gates is an emotional experience. People describe feeling calm, connected, and grounded. Those encountering Chinese traditions for the first time feel curiosity and welcome. For those whose roots trace back to China, the Garden offers something even more personal—a sense of recognition, belonging, and connection to their own cultural heritage. And for the many guests who travel from across the United States and around the world, Lan Su provides a rare and authentic window into Chinese culture, right here in Oregon.

That sense of meaning is not accidental. Lan Su was built as a bridge between Portland and Suzhou, between cultures, and between past and future.

The Lan Su Chinese Garden expansion project carries that mission forward.

This project will create dedicated space for contemporary Chinese arts, language, scholarship, and community gatherings. It allows us to tell a fuller story—not only of history, but of a living culture that continues to evolve. It connects Oregonians, visitors from across the country, and international guests to China at a time when global relationships are complex, yet deeply important to our economic and civic future.

Perhaps most importantly, it creates space for people to connect with one another.

We are living in a moment when division often feels louder than unity. Lan Su's expansion offers something different: a place where people from different backgrounds share tea, attend performances, learn together, and build relationships. That human connection is essential civic infrastructure.

There is urgency.

Old Town Chinatown needs visible, tangible signs of forward movement. Our region needs places that foster belonging. Oregon benefits when we invest in institutions that reflect both who we are and who we aspire to be.

This expansion ensures that Lan Su can continue serving as a cultural home—locally, nationally, and globally—for generations to come.

We respectfully ask for your support.

Thank you.