



Preserving & Enhancing Seattle's Historic Green Oasis

January 31, 2017

Jesus Aguirre, Superintendent
Seattle Parks and Recreation
100 Dexter Avenue North
Seattle, WA 98109

Dear Superintendent Aguirre:

Volunteer Park has great value as a green space, as an Olmsted designed park and as the home of the Seattle Asian Art Museum. Those of us on the Volunteer Park Trust (VPT) Steering Committee want to voice our support of SAAM and the importance of the Museum's mission, values and presence in the park. We understand the need to pause the review process to carefully consider the potential implications of giving up park space, but we hope that you will not allow a small group of very vocal dissenters to sidetrack the process and have undue influence. We are concerned that a prolonged delay in a decision might undermine the stability of the park and diminish activities and opportunities for park users.

The members of the VPT Steering Committee appreciate the series of meetings that the Seattle Asian Art Museum has held to gather feedback from the general public, VPT and Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks. Many issues on the design of the proposed museum addition and landscape have been raised and alternatives presented. The SAAM staff and design team have listened to these concerns and have made several changes: a much simpler landscape treatment, changes to the freight elevator area and modifications to the stairway from the third floor. Landscape connections with the rest of the park to restore the original Olmsted plan have been advocated for and are being considered. SAAM has held firm on the need to expand the museum in order for it to function in today's world and to serve a changing and growing community of users.

The Volunteer Part Trust was founded to restore, protect and preserve the park. We have worked for nearly five years to replant neglected beds and to address issues such as sustainability that are common to all of the institutions of the park. We have successful partnerships with the Conservatory, SAM and Seattle Parks and Recreation. We have collaborated with the Seattle Parks Foundation, FSOP, neighbors and schools. We have demonstrated that we care about the future of the park.



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We believe SAAM and engaged stakeholders are very close to finding a solution that protects the park's historic landscape and meets the museum's needs. We look forward to continuing to participate in the dialogue about what is best for the park and continuing to work with SAAM in the future.

Sincerely,

Brian Giddens, Chair
Volunteer Park Trust Steering Committee

Cc: Kim Rorschach, Seattle Art Museum
Andy Mitton, Friends of Seattle Olmsted Parks
Thatcher Bailey, Seattle Parks Foundation