



117 E. Louisa Street #1
Seattle, WA 98102

March 29, 2018

David Graves
Major Projects Challenge Fund
Seattle Parks and Recreation
100 Dexter Ave N
Seattle, WA 98109

Dear Mr. Graves:

The Eastlake Community Council supports the Volunteer Park Trust's Volunteer Park Amphitheater Project. Founded in 1971, ECC represents those who live, work, or own property in Eastlake, a unique mixed-use neighborhood which includes about 5000 residents and 5000 employees.

Volunteer Park is the largest City park in Eastlake's vicinity. Since our neighborhood's founding in the 1890s, and even before park construction was begun, those who live or work in Eastlake have made the steep climb up Capitol Hill to the park site—via the historic walking and bicycle trails, by the historic 10th Avenue East streetcar, and by the Blaine and Howe Street stairs 1911 (constructed in 1911). Eastlakers were increasingly drawn to Volunteer Park as it added the water tower, formal gardens, the conservatory, and the art museum.

Construction of I-5 in 1962 imposed a new barrier between Eastlake and Volunteer Park, but the 2005 opening of the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation's I-5 Colonnade Open Space under the freeway created a new stairway connection from the Blaine and Howe Street stairs down to the Eastlake Avenue and Lake Union areas. An important component of the I-5 Colonnade Open Space is the off-leash area that the Park Department designated as a substitute for the Volunteer Park off-leash area that had to be closed for environmental reasons.

In coordination with the Parks Department and other agencies and supported by the Neighborhood Matching Fund, a two-year planning and public involvement project culminated in 2016 in a schematic long-range plan by J.A. Brennan and Associates for the entire Colonnade area. The plan lays out many improvements including ADA-accessible pedestrian and bicycle connections to and from Capitol Hill.

The Volunteer Park Amphitheater and its Great Lawn annually host thousands of people from all of Seattle's neighborhoods to attend everything from major concerts to weddings. However, the current structure fails to meet community needs on many levels. It provides no ADA access, no load-in access, no storage, no protection from weather, poor access to power, poor acoustics, and a failure to blend in with the Olmsted design of the park.

ECC salutes the Volunteer Park Trust's extensive community outreach to performers, community organizations, neighbors, and the general public in the new Amphitheater design. The project will create an ADA-accessible, thoughtfully designed, effective performance space that meets the broad needs of Seattle's performing arts community and the concerns of local residents. It will be enjoyed by individuals from all of Seattle's neighborhoods.

The Eastlake Community Council supports the Volunteer Park Amphitheater Project and urges the Parks Department to fund it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ann Prezyna".

Ann Prezyna, President
info@eastlakeseattle.org
<http://eastlakeseattle.org>