



**BAYSIDE
NEIGHBORHOOD
ASSOCIATION**

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DATE: October 16, 2025
TO: Portland City Council
FROM: Bayside Neighborhood Association
SUBJECT: Midtown Properties

Dear Mayor and City Councilors,

On behalf of the Bayside Neighborhood Association, I am requesting that the City Council set aside a portion of the Midtown parcel to create a new Bayside Community Park for this rapidly growing neighborhood with little recreation space and the fewest trees of any Portland neighborhood.

The 2000 New Vision For Bayside calls for public open space near the intersection of Chestnut and Somerset streets. It was never built. Setting aside land for a park in this area will create equity for Bayside residents and serve the wider Portland community.

After talking with residents and the schools and daycares in the neighborhood (which serve more than 1,700 students each school day), the neighborhood association has identified a number of unmet recreational needs, including those of the two high schools in the neighborhood, each of which lacks outdoor recreation space.

Some suggest that Portland should rely on developers to create parkland in Bayside. However, this argument ignores what happens when we leave park development to real estate investors. An example on Chestnut Street is the "Daymark Park," which was billed as a community recreation space when under review by the Planning Board. But once it was built next to the condo building it turned out to be a drainage basin with one picnic table.

Others suggest that sales revenue should be maximized, and that it would be too costly to create a park when Bayside residents can travel to other neighborhoods to enjoy parks. This ignores the fact that Kennedy Park and Deering Oaks are too far away for high school students to travel to during lunch hour and that the road crossings to get to those parks are too dangerous for younger children to cross on their own. The argument also ignores the fact that parks increase the price of nearby real estate and boost quality of life for all residents. The parcels next to the land set aside for a park should be sold for more than the parcels that don't abut the park.

While higher-income neighbors are served by their buildings' gyms and the many for-profit gyms that operate in the neighborhood, lower-income neighbors rely on public amenities, which are lacking for teenagers and adults. The unmet recreational needs of the neighborhood include:

- Basketball courts that children and teenagers can access without crossing major traffic routes. Portland's CIP for fiscal year 2026 allocates \$150,000 for Bayside basketball courts, pending a designated location.
- Picnic tables, for students and workers on their lunch breaks
- Grassy areas, for picnics or kicking a ball, which the lack of public space currently forces into the streets
- Shade trees, to help increase tree equity in Portland's least-equitable neighborhood
- Adult exercise equipment, for residents, high school students, and trail users
- Raised garden beds, to be tended by students
- A miniature arboretum, for teaching purposes
- A splash pad, for summer days when the Stone Street splash pad is over capacity
- A Story Walk along the trail, to serve young students and residents
- Natural play spaces with sticks and mud puddles, for preschoolers
- Water bottle filling stations, for park and trail users
- Bike repair stations, for trail users

Due to its history of redlining, slum clearing, and discriminatory zoning, the Bayside neighborhood lacks the parks, green space, trees, and recreational facilities other neighborhoods enjoy. Today the City Council has an opportunity to change this history.

I hope we can work together to make the Bayside Community Park a reality.

Sincerely,
Thomas

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'TB' followed by a stylized flourish.

Thomas Blackburn, President
Bayside Neighborhood Association

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