



June 23, 2026

Dear Directors Schmanski and Pearce, and Members of Portland Parks & Recreation:

The Olmsted Network urges Portland Parks & Recreation to deny the Non-Park Use Permit application that would allow Sherwood Field in Washington Park to be used as a temporary parking lot for several weekends this summer.

Though framed as a pilot, planning documents identify Sherwood Field as a candidate for future parking expansion—so the precedent at stake extends well beyond four weekends.

Washington Park reflects the Olmsted tradition: John Charles Olmsted recommended the changes in 1903 that gave the park its present name, entrance, and circulation, building on Frederick Law Olmsted's vision of parks as democratic spaces offering respite and access to nature for all. Open meadows are not surplus land awaiting development—they are fundamental to the park experience.

Sherwood Field is one of the few large open landscapes remaining in a park that draws 3.5 million visitors annually. Beyond recreation and community gathering, such meadows deliver measurable benefits like stormwater absorption and urban cooling. As urban parks face growing pressure from development, these landscapes become more important, not less.

The transportation challenges are real, but they call for off-site parking, expanded shuttles, community engagement, and a comprehensive mobility study — not for turning one of the park's last lawns into a lot where cars park directly on the grass, marked off with cones and chalk.

The Olmsted Network respectfully urges Portland Parks & Recreation to protect Sherwood Field and prioritize people and landscape over the storage of automobiles.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sue Breitkopf".

Sue Breitkopf
President
Olmsted Network