

October 15, 2024

Charlie Hales

City Commissioner 1993-2002
Mayor 2013-2017

Earl Blumenauer

Commissioner of Public Works 1987-1996

The *Forest Park Natural Resources Management Plan* was approved unanimously in 1995 by the Portland City Council. The plan was developed by City staff, with extensive input from the community, and included public testimony and discussion before the Planning Commission and City Council. I, Earl Blumenauer was Commissioner of Public Works responsible for planning and transportation. I, Charlie Hales, was serving at that time as Commissioner-in-Charge of the Bureaus of Planning and Parks and Recreation.

The goal of the plan was to steward the health of the largest urban forest in the country and a jewel in our city. We recognized at the time that the City did not possess sufficient resources to implement our recommendations, but with Goal 1 of the plan we articulated our aspirational intentions for the future of Forest Park.

The function of the existing utility easements and development of transmission lines was not raised as a significant policy consideration during the process. Our view was that the lines existed and, regardless how one might feel about them, were necessary for delivering reliable electricity in our region. The plan offers guidance for the City and utilities to collaborate on conservation goals, but does not speak directly to a future need for expanded energy transmission. Our intention was not to prohibit any future development for this purpose. Given the current need for overdue grid improvements here and nationally to ensure reliability, address climate change, and transition to renewable energy, this is something Portland may want to revisit for the sake of clarity.

The *Natural Resources Management Plan* was intended as a guiding document to inform the overall health of Forest Park and should be interpreted as such. In our view, the two most pressing issues were then, and remain now, invasive species such as English Ivy and the risk of forest fires. Portland would be well served to consider any plan that brings new resources to the large-scale removal of ivy and ladder fuels throughout the park. With the proliferation of fires throughout the Pacific Northwest, this is a literal example of not losing the forest through the trees.

A reading of the *Natural Resources Management Plan* that obstructs the needed provision of power in the utility easements and surrenders a partnership opportunity to make needed investments in forest health would be a deviation from our original intent.

Thank you,

Earl Blumenauer



Charlie Hales

