



East Portland Action Plan

February 16, 2012

RE: Leach Botanical Garden and Lents Town Center Urban Renewal Area

Dear Lents Town Center Urban Renewal Area Advisory Committee and Portland Development Commission:

East Portland Action Plan (EPAP) encourages the Lents Town Center Urban Renewal Area (LTCURA) to support funding for improvements at Leach Botanical Garden. The EPAP was convened by the City of Portland to provide leadership and guidance to public agencies and other entities on how to strategically address community-identified issues and allocate resources to improve livability for neighborhoods in the East Portland Neighborhood Office (EPNO) coalition area.

Leach Botanical Garden is located in East Portland, an area where amenities such as developed park spaces and associated learning programs are limited. With the improvements that are envisioned through LTCURA funding, the Garden will be able to provide a beautiful natural setting where many community groups can offer programs and events away from the urban landscape. Leach Botanical Garden is the only institution of its kind in the metropolitan area; helping to make it more usable by the surrounding community adds great value. **Leach's uniqueness makes it a destination that will serve to enhance economic development in the area, by drawing people from the surrounding tri-county area.**

Supporting Leach Botanical Garden is in alignment with the following Action items outlined in the East Portland Action Plan:

CB.4.1	Develop areas that are a source of community pride and identity: foster an 'eastside downtown' and community gathering areas and/or farmers markets.
CB.4.2	Identify target areas for holding community organizing activities such as commercial nodes or neighborhoods focal points such as schools, parks or community centers.
P.2.2 lead	Develop and improve facilities at East Portland parks that are currently undeveloped.
P.4.9 lead	Prioritize acquisition and development of parks in existing underserved areas or where significant residential development is anticipated: Gateway, Powellhurst/Gilbert, MAX station areas.

NA.3.5	Develop and implement East Portland natural areas public education program to increase awareness and use (where appropriate).
NA.4.1 lead	Increase active and passive recreation space on par with citywide recreation space and best practices standards.
CB.5.1	Promote positive media stories for East Portland.
CB.5.2	Develop a marketing campaign about why East Portland is a great place to buy a home.

The expansion of the Garden in recent years makes it possible to move the main entrance to a safer location at the top of the bluff, making the garden more visible – and more accessible to the community. Recent investigation by the EPAP has demonstrated broad community support for Leach Botanical Garden. Continued 2013 - 14 funding from PDC through the Lents Town Center Urban Renewal Area is critical to achieving capitalizing on this great East Portland asset. It will leverage additional investment, making it possible for the Garden to maximize the improvements included in the first phase of construction and increasing the overall economic impact of the project.

We encourage you to restore funding for the implementation of Phase I of the Leach Garden Master Plan, including \$1.1 million for construction in 2012/13 and 2013/14.

Sincerely,

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EAST PORTLAND ACTION PLAN

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