

From: [Christine Chute](#)
To: [citycouncil](#); [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: Mowing in Bush's Pasture Park
Date: Saturday, August 23, 2025 10:32:39 AM

Dear Councilor Nishioka and other Councilors,

I see from the paper that Council will be considering a "motion to change mowing practices in the southwest picnic and recreation areas of Bush's Pasture Park". I know the staff has heard a lot of complaints about the delayed mowing, because I have heard them myself. Evidently, Council has heard now heard them.

Before Council votes on any such motion, I urge you to do two things:

1. Take a close look at the Bush/Deepwood Cultural Landscape Management Plan ([CLMP](#)), adopted by Council after a lengthy deliberative process that included many members of the Salem community, local tribes, and expert input.

The CLMP includes a specific management plan for the SW section of the Park ("Upper Oak Grove"), which identifies protecting the Oregon White Oaks as the "highest priority" for this area, while allowing "lower impact activities * * * such as picnicking". Page 127-32. The plan specifically calls for later mowing in this area to encourage wildflower regeneration. Page 131. (As an almost daily visitor to this part of the park, I can tell you that this year, for the first time I can remember, I have seen camas blooming in the SW corner of Bush's Pasture Park. Mowing will be the end of this resurgence.)

2. Decide whether it is really Council's job to be redrawing mowing boundaries for parts of a city park. Is Council really going to drill down into park maintenance questions to the level of examining certain portions of individual parks? That seems odd to me, especially in light of where Council's attention needs to be (public safety, budget, and revenue issues).

Currently, there are a few picnic tables located in the SW corner of the park, so picnicking is allowed by current park practices.

Perhaps the practical question may be whether the number of tables is adequate for large groups? Whether some users like the long grass? There are picnic tables scattered throughout the park and large groups can (and do) picnic elsewhere. Why City Council is being asked to review and revise the location and number of picnic

tables (if that's the issue) is beyond me, especially in light of the CLMP which explicitly favors preservation of the oak trees, regeneration of wildflowers, and later mowing. Is having large groups in this part of the park consistent with the CLMP?

Council is probably being asked to amend the CLMP again (as you did by giving Willamette more space for its baseball stadium). You are actually being asked either to eliminate the priority set for this part of the Park in the CLMP or make an expert judgment that staff's implementation of the CLMP is inappropriate. The first should widely engage the public; the second seems outside your expertise. And, if you are amending the CLMP, I urge you to give better notice. It may not be obvious that a discussion of mowing entails reconsideration of the CLMP. Any such amendment should engage a public process that is as inclusive as the development of the original plan. The CLMP was a thorough and thoughtful process. The plan should not be amended in the guise of discussing mowing and picnics, and in the absence of an equally thoughtful and thorough process with explicit public notice.

Sincerely,

Christine Chute
Ward 2

From: [Claudia Howells](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: Agenda Item #25-314, relating to mowing of areas in Bush's Pasture Park
Date: Sunday, August 24, 2025 9:50:00 PM

Mayor and members of the City Council:

I don't object to Councilor Nishioka's motion to mow areas of the upper park to allow for more public use, nor do I object to allowing grass grow in other areas of the park through much of the summer season, except for one important concern.

Historically, grass has been allowed to grow in the Lower Oak Grove to protect the Camas and Oak trees, but the area has always been mowed in late July, or when the grass began to dry out. This year, the area has stayed natural, and in so doing the area is now at higher risk for fire. This is an area close to apartments and homes, including mine, with no easy access to fire hydrants. It is a very vulnerable area.

The risk of urban wildfires is real, so I hope the Fire Chief is working with the Parks Department to ensure that fire safety is always considered and that the City is a good example to the public. It is a code violation to allow grass and weeds to be over a foot, for good reason. We should know from very recent experience that no community in Oregon is safe from wildfires.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Claudia Howells

1045 Cross St. SE

Received At Council Meeting
Meeting Date: June 9, 2025
Agenda Item: Pub. Com. 8
Received by: A. Johnson
From: David Glennie

Madame Mayor and Councilors:

My name is David Glennie and my business address is 445 Myers St. SE. This has been my office for over 23 years and lies one-half block west of Bush Park. I had the privilege of representing Ward 2 as a City Councilor from 1995-98.

I am here owing a June 1 article in the *Statesman Journal*, explaining that the City has chosen to leave the southwest corner of the park fallow until September.

As a frequent user of Bush Park throughout my office tenure, I've witnessed many overlooked facts about this ill-advised policy:

1. This area is the most popular spot for family picnics and club events, with hundreds of gatherings ranging from a few people to over 80.
2. It's the only place in Bush Park with adjacent and adequate parking, multiple tables, and shade.
3. This quadrant is heavily used by dog walkers, runners, schools, and church groups.
4. The City has already applied the "wildflower" policy to over half the park—excluding McCulloch Stadium.
5. Multiple annual events use the Soap Box Derby hill. Does the City expect visitors and their children to sit in four-foot-tall weeds?

City staff claimed they've received "positive feedback." I am curious about the details supporting this statement. It resonated with disbelief, for me, and I chose to ask for opinions from other park users. I personally spoke with 21 people in the Upper Oak Grove area in the past 10 days, including regular park denizens and a few there for a special purpose. None with whom I spoke supported this policy. Many offered the comment that "saving oak trees" and "more wildflowers" are excuses for the real motive: saving money.

Tall grassy areas are already popular with the unhoused. Why create additional habitat for this population at the expense of a welcoming and longstanding community gathering area?

I've reviewed the 150-page "Cultural Landscape Management Plan" the City cites. It says nothing about letting picnic areas go to seed.

Who approved this policy? Who's accountable? Was it a staff-driven policy change rubber-stamped by the City Council? Consider how this may appear to a Salem visitor. It is not a compelling advertisement for the city's livability.

And here's an irony: If my office lawn exceeded 10 inches, I'd get a letter from the City demanding I cut it or pay a fine. Tall dry grass invites both campers and wildfire risk, especially in late summer and early fall. If this is a cost-saving measure, just admit it. Don't insult us with excuses. Bush Park is Salem's premier park. It should be well-maintained to welcome all visitors.

Finally, if the City intends to stick to its guns on this topic, please erect signs at the perimeter and parking areas that explain: "The City of Salem no longer wishes to share the picnic venue with taxpayers and guests. Growing wildflowers has supplanted common sense to save a few taxpayer dollars."

David Glennie
445 Myers St. SE
Salem, OR 97302
dave@telosdevelopment.com

SRC 50.025 Definitions

Noxious vegetation means weeds more than ten inches in height; grass more than ten inches in height; rank or dead vegetation; poison oak, poison hemlock, poison ivy; hazardous thickets; or other rank, noxious, and dangerous vegetation that is a health hazard, a fire hazard, or a traffic hazard because it impairs the view of a public right-of-way or otherwise makes use of the public right-of-way hazardous. The term "noxious vegetation" shall not include agriculture crops, endangered riparian grasses that have not come to seed, and wet land grasses that are neither a fire nor a traffic hazard.

Rank vegetation means any vegetation existing in a state of uncontrolled growth or without commonly recognized vegetation maintenance or management practices applied.

Sec. 50.705. - Noxious vegetation prohibited.

(a)

No owner shall cause or permit noxious or rank vegetation upon premises or in the right-of-way of a street abutting any premises.

(b)

In addition to, or in lieu of, any other enforcement action authorized by law, the Health Officer may cause a violation of this section to be corrected in the same manner as a public nuisance pursuant to SRC 50.810 to 50.880.

statesman journal

LOCAL

'No-mow' schedule implemented at Bush's Pasture Park. This is why



Tracy Loew

Salem Statesman Journal

June 1, 2025, 3:55 a.m. PT

Key Points

The grass in the upper oak grove of Bush's Pasture Park will not be mowed until mid-September.

The change is part of an effort to encourage wildflower regeneration and protect the park's Oregon White Oaks.

Additional plans for the park include changes to trails, event locations, and play areas.

Visitors to Bush's Pasture Park, just south of downtown Salem, will notice a change this summer.

The city's Parks and Recreation department has announced it will not mow the upper oak grove, in the southwest corner of the park, until mid-September. The city also is expanding mulch rings around the oak trees, to protect their roots.

The aim is to encourage wildflower regeneration and protect the native seed bank, city officials say.

Already, grasses are knee-high in the area, and some camas are blooming.

City spokeswoman Kathy Ursprung said the changes are a trial run, and city staff will closely monitor the results to see what happens.

So far, she said, city staff in the park are getting positive feedback from users.

The city is asking park users to stay on the paths, but to otherwise not change their use of the park, she said.

Plans call for ecological preservation at Bush's Pasture Park

The 90.5-acre city park is popular with walkers, joggers and picnickers. It's the site of events including the Salem Art Fair & Festival, soap box derby races, the Awesome 3000, cross-country meets and more.

Management of the park has been leaning more toward ecological and historic preservation since 2019, when the Mission Street Parks Conservancy released a [report](#) on the health of the park's centuries-old Oregon white oaks.

It showed that pedestrians and vehicles were compacting the soil around the oaks' roots, cutting the trees' life expectancy. Among the biggest culprits was the Art Fair.

During 2020, the city of Salem developed an extensive [Cultural Landscape Management](#) plan for the park, which recommended phasing out the Art Fair from the oak grove. And in 2021, a massive ice storm hit the area, felling 20 of the park's oaks.

Festival organizers made the decision to [shift nearly the entire festival](#) from the shaded path beneath the oaks, where it had been held for seven decades, to the open pasture north of the oak grove.

With changing weather patterns and without the shade provided by the oaks, festivalgoers and vendors complained about excessive heat. Last year, the festival changed from its traditional July dates to mid-September.

Mow date could be adjusted

The city tentatively chose a mid-September mow date based on several factors, Ursprung said. Those include:

The annual growth cycle of camas, other wildflowers, and Oregon white oaks. Mowing is scheduled after seed maturation and dispersal. In the case of acorns, this allows them to begin germinating and grow, hopefully to a size visible enough to be flagged and avoided during mowing.

Nesting periods for ground-nesting pollinators, beneficial insects and birds, which generally peak earlier in the season.

Fire risk management, as vegetation becomes increasingly dry later in the summer.

“It’s also worth noting that several non-native trees, particularly red oaks, in the upper oak grove are in visible decline,” she said. “Parks is considering a strategy to remove some of these trees over time, as they are prolific acorn producers and may compete with native regeneration.”

Parks staff stopped mowing a small section of the upper oak grove, south of Willamette University, in 2019. Since then, woody native shrubs have become established.

“We’ve also observed camas and other wildflowers continuing to emerge, potentially in greater numbers than in previous years,” she said.

More changes planned for Bush’s Pasture Park

The city’s management plan breaks the park into 14 management areas, with recommendations for each.

Additional recommendations for the upper oak grove include changes to circulation, events, furnishings and equipment to reduce impact to the trees’ root zones.

It recommends confining future events to paved surfaces, while maintaining lower-impact uses such as picnicking and small gatherings; planting native oaks and removing non-native trees; and making changes to the swing set and play area to meet ADA guidelines and place it outside of oak driplines.

And it recommends upgrading paved trails to support accessibility.

In recent years, park staff have experimented with leaving fall leaves in the upper oak grove and plan to build on that effort, potentially starting this fall, Ursprung said.

Parks staff also intend to bring the upper oak grove playground improvements into the city's capital improvement plan process, she said.

"A key challenge is securing an appropriate funding source. For example, adding back swings will require site improvements, including one or more accessible routes, which increases the overall cost," she said.

Park-wide, the city has begun implementing a more intentional review process to evaluate proposed actions against a range of considerations, Ursprung said.

That includes assessing how facility use permits and special events align with the goals and objectives outlined in the management plan, as well as those specific to individual management areas.

"We've worked with the sponsors of many regularly scheduled annual events to make adjustments that better support our overall park management and resource protection goals," she said.

Tracy Loew covers the environment at the Statesman Journal. Send comments, questions and tips: tloew@statesmanjournal.com or 503-399-6779. Follow her on Twitter at [@Tracy_Loew](https://twitter.com/Tracy_Loew)



PROFILE

Note: This management area includes three sub-areas.

The Upper Oak Grove is the dominant feature of the southwestern portion of the park. It begins south of the Crooked House Playground and extends south to Leffelle Street SE, west to High Street SE, and east to the Lower Pasture where it intermingles with the Rhododendron Hillside Garden. This area, along with the Bush House Museum, Upper Pasture (Bush's Pasture), and Rose Garden, sits upon a flat terrace above the Pringle Creek floodplain. The Upper Oak Grove is a remnant of what would have been a much larger Oregon white oak woodland in the time before Salem developed; some trees estimated to be several hundred years old. Over the years, woodland floor vegetation was cleared, paved and unpaved trails built, and picnic and play features added within turf areas. There are some planted shrubs, non-native trees, and perennials lining the Upper Pasture (Bush's Pasture). In other locations of the Upper Oak Grove, woodland conditions are more naturalized.



The Upper Oak Grove sub-areas form the southwest corner of the park.

Upper Oak Grove MANAGEMENT AREA 13



The eastern edge of the Upper Oak Grove looking north toward the Bush Barn Art Center.



The site of the annual Salem Art Fair, southeast of Bush's Pasture, in the Oak Refocus and Stabilization sub-area.



The Oak Woodland Restoration sub-area includes two wildflower locations, including one shown here at the top of the Soap Box Derby Track.

13a. The Oak Refocus and Stabilization sub-area includes mature, established oaks and other tree species south and east of Bush's Pasture and west of the Soap Box Derby Track (see Soap Box Derby Track: Management Area 4). This area also extends into the canopy of the Rhododendron Hillside Garden. Most trees in this part of the Upper Oak Grove have small mulch rings intended to protect the trunks and larger roots from lawn mowers. A restroom is located here supporting the needs of picnickers and those using the north-south paved trail, which is heavily used year-round by walkers and joggers. This area has historically hosted the annual Salem Art Fair.

13b. The Oak Woodland Restoration sub-area is at a quiet corner of the Upper Oak Grove, located east of the Soap Box Derby Track. It includes established, mature oaks with semi-closed canopies, remnant native understory species, as well as informal/social trails, and invasive patches of blackberry, non-native grasses and/or forbs. Wildflowers are being reestablished in this sub-area in two locations: at the top of the derby track in a grassy area with open tree canopy; another is on the slope leading down to Lewis Field. This area has low levels of pedestrian traffic.

13c. The Picnic and Playground sub-area occupies an unvegetated and open area beneath mature oak canopy in the southwest corner of the park. It contains remnants of the Upper Leffelle playground, which was associated with a gift from the Sorooptimist Club of Salem to the City of Salem in 1950, and picnic furnishings, as well as established mature oaks with semi-closed canopies. Other features include picnic tables and benches. The play equipment has been removed as it was unsafe and did not meet current standards.

Upper Oak Grove MANAGEMENT AREA 13



AREA GOALS

- **Promote the long-term resiliency and dynamic health** of this diverse area for continued park enjoyment and interpretation by supporting native vegetation, decreasing soil compaction, and protecting roots.



PRIMARY MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE AND APPROACH

Manage the Upper Oak Grove to conserve the existing Oregon white oaks on a spectrum from stabilization to restoration. Promote responsible human activities within the oak grove through appropriate upgrades and changes to circulation, events, furnishings and equipment that reduce impact to trees' critical root zones. Restore other areas with lower foot traffic to reflect a more native system with appropriate oak woodland companion plants, forbs, wildflowers and shrubs. Manage the Upper Oak Grove so it can be fully enjoyed, but in a more balanced and responsible way than in times past.



The east slope of the Oak Woodland Restoration sub-area near the Willamette University complex.



The Picnic and Playground sub-area of the Upper Oak Grove.



Pedestrian entrance to the Upper Oak Grove near the corner of High Street SE and Lefelle Street SE.

Upper Oak Grove MANAGEMENT AREA 13



The southwest corner of the Upper Oak Grove.



PROGRAM

Activities for this area include walking, running, outdoor event space, picnicking, and restroom facilities.



THINGS TO CONSIDER

- **Protecting the oaks is the highest priority** for this area while also maintaining lower impact park activities that have taken place here since the historic period, such as picnicking and small gatherings.
- **Upgrading play equipment at Upper Leffelle** will require providing an accessible (paved) trail to the new features, expanded fall zones, and ground disturbance, likely impacting oak tree root zones.²³
- There is a need for a **City of Salem policy for Nature Play.**
- There is a need for a **City of Salem policy governing removal of trees in historic areas** which can facilitate priority park rehabilitation projects and activities.

²³ Note: Accessibility requirements ensure that park users of all age ranges and abilities will be able to experience the renovated play features whether they use their own two feet, a cane, walker, crutches, push a stroller, are accompanied by young children, grandparents or companions, or ride an assistive wheelchair or cart. Accessible routes are not only for the disabled – they are for everyone's enjoyment and ease. This may be challenging from a design and construction perspective given the likely impact to mature oak tree roots.



RECOMMENDED ACTIONS AND TASKS

Promote oak grove health by phasing out Art Fair in the Upper Oak Grove, thereby eliminating soil compaction from setup, takedown, and art fair attendees. Confine any future use of area for events to paved surfaces.

Upper Oak Grove MANAGEMENT AREA 13

Promote wildflower regeneration and seed bank formation by waiting to mow these areas until mid-summer or later.

Encourage oak stand restoration by planting native oaks, removing competing species (Himalayan blackberry, English ivy, etc.) and non-native trees.

Establish wider mulch rings around oaks and groups of oaks to reduce soil compaction within their drip lines and reduce turf lawn and mowing requirements.

Minimize all soil compaction from mowers and leaf collection.

Remove the remnant swing set near Upper Leffelle picnic area and assess feasibility of new swing set that meets ADA and is outside of oak driplines (see Future Capital Projects in this section).

Develop a City of Salem policy around the goal to provide alternative play options including all ages and nature play, and considerations for including those in existing and new parks, including construction considerations.

Add bike racks near restrooms.

Note: Many of the recommended actions and tasks listed for the Lower Oak Grove area apply to the Oak Woodland Restoration sub-area.



The western edge of the Upper Oak Grove looking south along High Street SE.

Upper Oak Grove MANAGEMENT AREA 13



Mulch rings near the Upper Oak Grove picnic area.



SEASONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Oak Refocus and Stabilization Sub-area

Spring - Phase out turf grass beneath trees. Allow leaves to remain or collect using low impact methods. Expand mulch rings and strip sod to protect root systems and reduce mowing. Where there are groupings of oaks, connect multiple mulch rings to eliminate small turf patches that remain.

Fall - Maintain mulch rings around trees. Spot spray herbicide to assist in the control of non-native turf grass growing in mulch rings. Adjust leaf removal practices to minimize driving through drip zones and contributing to soil compaction that harms Oregon white oaks. Mulch leaves.



FUTURE CAPITAL PROJECTS

Assess feasibility and conceptual design of the Upper Leffelle playground while taking into context the mature oak trees. Minimize disturbance to the oak trees.

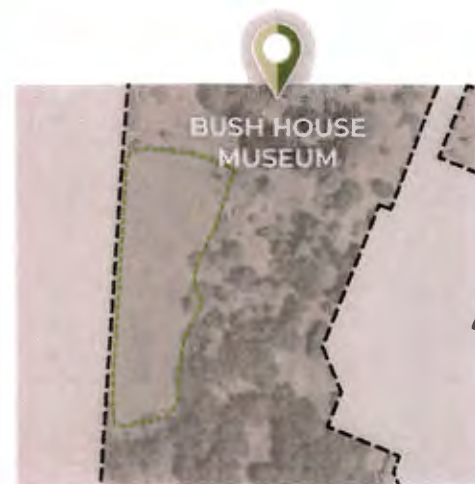
Upgrade paved trails around the restroom to improve condition, access and drainage. Eroded turf alongside the trails also needs to be addressed. Trails in this area will need to be regraded, rebuilt, and potentially redesigned to support accessibility throughout the Upper Oak Grove.



PROFILE

Established as a fenced open grazing pasture by the Bush family, this large, oblong turf open space is located along High Street SE between the Bush House driveway and Miller Street SE. It is managed as a mown and irrigated lawn for picnicking, pick-up sports, sun-bathing, and pick-up games. Bush's Pasture's east and south edges are lined by large oaks and Douglas fir trees that belong to the Upper Oak Grove. An allée of horse chestnut trees line the pasture's north edge. A soft surface path used by walkers and joggers parallels High Street. This path was partially widened in 2018 using crushed rock, but was controversial given the path alignment over the root zone of trees and installation was discontinued.

During the historic period, the Upper Pasture was fenced and used as grazing land for livestock and was covered with native grasses and wildflowers. Livestock circulated between the pasture and barn area.



Bush's Pasture borders High Street on the eastern edge of the park.

Bush's Pasture MANAGEMENT AREA 14



A horse chestnut allée form the northern boundary of Bush's Pasture.



A stand of mixed trees forms the southeastern boundary of Bush's Pasture.



Young trees and ornamental plantings near the Bush Barn Art Center articulates the eastern boundary of Bush's Pasture.



AREA GOAL

- **Protect and maintain the pasture's open character,** adjacent oak trees, and the strong visual association with the Bush House Museum Grounds.



PRIMARY MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE AND APPROACH

Manage the Upper Pasture primarily as an expansive lawn for informal play, picnicking, and informal sports activities. This area will also support reinforcing the cultural heritage of the site by maintaining its open character and relationship to the Bush House Museum Grounds.



PROGRAM

Activities for this area include picnicking, walking and jogging along the High Street path, and informal active recreation.

From: dave@telosdevelopment.com
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Cc: ["William Glennie"; "Dave Glennie"](#)
Subject: 8/25/25 ADDITION TO AGENDA ITEM 5.a
Date: Monday, August 25, 2025 7:30:24 AM
Attachments: [Bush Park Spreadsheet.082425.final.pdf](#)
[Before and After Picnic Areas.pdf](#)

Madame Recorder:

Please add these two attachments to tonight's packet. This relates to Councilor Nishioka's motion regarding Bush Park's "no-mow" policy. I believe it is Agenda Item 5,a

Please confirm receipt.

I intend to also attend the meeting and add additional testimony. I'm not sure if I can sign up with this email, and will check when I enter the venue.

Best regards,

David Glennie
(503)559-6292

SAVING THE WHITE OAKS - COMPARISON BETWEEN STATEMENTS AND IMPLEMENTED PARK POLICIES

	Source (See Notes 1 & 2)	Statement from CLMP	City Imposed Policy	Common Sense Response	Recommended Adjustment	Discussion
1	Page 3 (1.1)	The consulting arborists stress that this report is <u>fundamentally a work of opinion, and therefore subjective.</u>	General statement.	Not applicable (NA)	NA	
2	Page 4 (2.3)	This species is also well known for thriving in challenging conditions.	General statement.	NA	NA	
3	Page 8(5.3)	Soil compaction is one of the main issues that will affect the health and longevity of trees in the upper grove.	General statement.	NA	NA	Soil compaction is the primary argument to implement the current "no mow" policy. It conflates Art Fair activity with picnickers.
4	Page 9-10 (5.5) (5.6) (5.7)	(1) Average human compaction creates pressure of 8 PSI. (2) Standard passenger car or pickup truck is approximately 30 PSI. (3) We noted many trees which had mechanical damage on the root flare consistent with lawn mowing equipment.	Let entire Upper Oak Grove go to seed, promote high grass and fire hazard, isolate play area, remove picnic benches, cease picking up litter and garbage, request walkers stay on asphalt paths.	Vehicular and heavy equipment use is far more impactful than picnicking. Trees have survived over 150 years co-existing with picnickers.	Hand-mowing around trees in upper grove picnic area a prudent policy to protect root health.	City response to questions regarding "science" has consistently misplaced "blame" on picnickers.
5	Page 10 (5.8)	Irrigation can be very harmful to mature Oregon White Oak trees	Stop watering in dry season.	Limit irrigation in dry summer/fall months. Irrigation also amplifies compaction.	Limit irrigation during dry weather.	
6	Page 129, "Management Objective"	Manage the Upper Oak Grove so it can be fully enjoyed, but in a more balanced and responsible way than in times past.	Reports make continual references to impacts of Art Fair traffic. Many recommendations ignore differentiation between Art Fair activities and picnicking	Picnicking, group events in picnic area have little impact and represent no threat to White Oaks. A careful reader will note there are no recommendations to remove tables and implement "no mow" in picnic areas.	Keep picnic areas mowed and accessible year-round. Limit irrigation and mow around tree bases.	On a global scale, there is no discussion of defining "success" or measuring positive outcomes. The removal of the primary picnic area punishes those who enjoyed it to benefit a few who falsely believe picnicking is a true threat.
7	Page 130, "Things to Consider"	Protecting the oaks is the highest priority for this area while also maintaining lower impact park activities that have taken place here since the historic period, such as picnicking and small gatherings	Current policy completely ignored this recommendation.		Follow this recommendation.	Appears the no-mow policy was implemented without considering the costs to many park patrons.

Notes:

1. Source material for items 1-5 is the "Report on Bush's Pasture Park Oak Woodland", an appendix to the Cultural Landscape Management Plan, or "CLMP".
2. Source material for items 6-7 is the "Upper Oak Grove Management Area 13" from the CLMP.

Before and After Picnic Area

Before



Source: Pg. 129-CMLP

After



Source: Photo Taken 8/24/2025

From: [Linda Nishioka](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: FW: Bush Park
Date: Sunday, August 24, 2025 1:05:56 PM

Testimony for Monday, 8/25/25.

Thank you,

Linda Nishioka (She/Her)
City Councilor - Ward 2
lnishioka@cityofsalem.net | 971-707-2112

From: gjgianotti@gmail.com <gjgianotti@gmail.com>
Date: Sunday, August 24, 2025 at 10:32 AM
To: Linda Nishioka <LNishioka@cityofsalem.net>
Subject: Bush Park

Hello,

I am writing about the no-mow policy.

I was born and raised in Salem. I have always loved Bush Park, it has been a constant in my 66 years. Although I moved away from Salem many years ago I visit several times a year.

I went to visit a friend who lives directly across from the SW corner and was SHOCKED at the appearance of the park. Not only did it not look approachable or inviting it was an eyesore to the neighborhood. It's like a house in the neighborhood that doesn't mow its yard! (The city would complain)I appreciate the intention to help the oak trees, but this is a public use park, not conservation area. This policy takes away from the primary use of the park, which is for the people of the community.

Sincerely,

Gretchen Gianotti
1724 S Harrier Road
Ridgefield, Washington 98642
541-760-9594
Sent from my iPhone

From: [John Prohodsky](#)
To: [citycouncil](#); [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: Tall grass at southwest corner of Bush's Pasture Park
Date: Sunday, August 24, 2025 9:13:50 PM

Dear Councilor Nishioka and other Councilors,

The southwest corner of Bush Park is attractive for picnics. It has picnic tables, parking, and shade provided by oak trees. I'm not surprised that the tall, unmown grass make the area less attractive to picnics. The oak trees that are already are stressed from heat and reduced rainfall will suffer additional stress if the recommendations on pages 127-132 of the [Cultural Landscape Management Plan for Bush's Pasture Park and Deepwood Estate Gardens](#) are not followed. That area will be less attractive for a picnic if there is no shade because the oak trees died from environmental stress.

I'm speculating that the vast majority of people picnicing in the southwest corner of Bush's Pasture Park don't know why the grass hasn't been mowed. A few signs explaining why the grass is not mowed could go a long way in reducing complaints about unmown grass. If picnic table use requires a reservation, adding an explanation about the high grass that must be acknowledged before the reservation is finalized might significantly reduce complaints about the unmown grass.

Respectfully,
John Prohodsky

From: [J Stembridge](#)
To: [citycouncil](#); [Linda Nishioka](#)
Subject: Management of Bush Park
Date: Monday, August 25, 2025 6:46:22 AM

Dear Linda and City Council,

We live near and deeply appreciate Bush Park, and have enjoyed recreating in Bush Park for nearly 50 years.

We volunteer in cleaning up graffiti, trail maintenance, and removal of trash from Bush Park.

Bush Park is a treasure for the entire community, and we believe it should be used and maintained as a public park for all to use and enjoy.

Therefore, we oppose the "no mow" park plan, as it has turned Bush Park into what looks like a derelict abandoned lot and fire hazard. And, the community has lost the ability to enjoy picnicking, walking, playing and recreating in Bush Park with the "no mow" plan.

We oppose the "no mow" plan.

We appreciate your service to the community, and thank you.

Sincerely,
Joan and Jim Stembridge

From: pmiddelburg@comcast.net
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: Continuation of No-Mow Policy for Bush's Pasture Park
Date: Sunday, August 24, 2025 4:05:17 PM

To members of the City Council:

I understand that the City is proposing to extend the seasonal “no-mow” restoration program for Bush’s Pasture Park. I wholeheartedly support this effort. I live directly across from the Southwestern corner of the Park and have watched the gradual degradation of the tree and plant life due to its overuse. The trees look so much healthier this year. People are using the pathways rather than crossing across the lawns, cars or trucks aren’t being driven up to the tables to drop off or pick up items for the picnic, and trash isn’t left behind to decompose on the lawns or around the trees. I’ve seen people hang from the tree limbs, pick flowers and discard them on the ground, leave piñata litter on the ground, pour bar-b-cue sauces and ash residue onto the base of the trees, and leave garbage for the park crew to pick up. Picnic usage has ranged in size from very small groups (6 or less people) to large groups (20 – 100+ people). These are just some of the observations I’ve made over the nearly 28 years of watching this corner of the Park. I am not anti-picnickers; I just don’t like to see people mistreat city property. The no-mow policy has changed the Southwest corner's usage for the better, in my opinion.

I am strongly opposed to Councilor Linda Nishioka’ proposal to creating a “safe, welcoming picnic area” in the Southwest corner. The no-mow policy is designed to save the trees and grounds of the Southwest corner, and her proposal is contradictory to the original objective – encourage wildflower regeneration and protecting the oak trees. There are other picnic areas in Bush’s Pasture Park as well as other city parks for people to use. This area should continue to being designated as a no-mow zone so that the area is given ample time to return to its natural beauty.

I encourage the City Council to continue to support the seasonal “no-mow” program as it was originally designed and reject Councilor Nishioka’s proposed changes.

Respectfully,

Patricia Middelburg

510 Leffelle Street SE

Salem, OR

From: noreply@cityofsalem.net on behalf of Stephenbrownfield@comcast.net
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: Submission
Date: Sunday, August 24, 2025 8:28:33 AM
Attachments: [ATT00001.bin](#)

Your Name	Stephen Brownfield
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City	Salem
State	OR
Zip	97302
Message	I would like to provide a comment to the City Council meeting on August 25th regarding the seasonal, no-mow restoration program at Bush's Pasture Park. I agree with Linda Nishioka's proposal to continue the no-mow restoration program AND maintain a safe, welcoming picnic area in the southwest corner of the park. Providing a well maintained (mowed) picnic area complete with picnic tables within the shaded area of this portion of the park should be a priority. This mowing could consist of mowing paths through the grass to picnic table locations where the grass has also been mowed. I believe picnic areas should maintained in all urban parks for the enjoyment of those who live nearby or those visiting our fine city.

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