



## Report: City not maintaining Forest Park

by Randy Neves

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PORTLAND, Ore. -- Independent researchers are suggesting Portland give up control of Forest Park to a government that can afford to take care of it.

The city acknowledges Forest Park maintenance is no longer keeping up with Forest Park use. Money is the big issue.

For the past year, a City Club of Portland committee of volunteers researchers studied Forest Park and talked to several experts about its health.

The committee is now reporting the Park's health is in jeopardy due to high off-trail use and the rapid spread of invasive non-native plants like English Ivy.

A minority of the committee thinks Metro Government would be a better financial steward of Forest Park.

The city says it's doing the best it can.

"At least Metro has the capacity, at this point, to create regional funding that the city really doesn't," said City Club volunteer researchers Megge Van Valkenburg.

Zari Santner is the City's Parks & Rec director.

She says the city is in the best position to find private partners to donate money and lend potential sponsorship to Forest Park care and maintenance.

"Changing the management from one organization to the other is not going to make any difference as long as there isn't enough money," said Santner.

Some behind the City Club report are urging the Parks Bureau to stop expanding it's park system and pay more attention to stabilizing Forest Park's health.

The City Club report suggests the Parks Bureau at least triple its Forest Park budget for five consecutive years just to get rid of the dreaded invasive plants.

The city is in budget-cut mode across all bureaus right now with no plans to ask voters for a parks levy.

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