Dear Governor Brown,

I am appealing to you on behalf of your neighbors in NE Salem who live near the Oregon State Hospital grounds currently up for sale.

After two plus years of wrangling with the Department of Administrative Services over the fate of about 10-15 acres of undeveloped land along the north end of the hospital grounds we of the Northeast Salem Neighborhood Association along with the Friends of the D Street Field are quite tired and are becoming increasingly disheartened.

At one point last spring there seemed to be a glimmer of hope that this vacant and beautifully under-developed piece of land paralleling D street would be sold to the city of Salem for a park and soccer/rugby field. Now, we are hearing that Department of Administrative Services considers this vacant property too attractive to prospective developers (because it’s so easy to build on) and may after all be included as part of the sale of the entire 64 acre state hospital grounds - located between Center and D - to the highest qualified bidder.

This comes after two years of meetings with DAS representatives and hearing from State Representative Clem and Senator Courtney that this land is too important to lose. No wonder we’re disheartened.

This is a very special, precious piece of Oregon that should not be lost forever and forgotten under a massive construction project. The benefit it provides the hundreds of people who use it every day and all the others who live near or commute past it daily is not measurable in dollars and cents. The local teams who play baseball, soccer and rugby there in the late afternoons and evening will also lose another simple open field where they can play freely along side the many families out with children and dogs who visit the grounds in the evening after their long days of work.

As a historic site it is of course valuable but once gone it will mean very little. The money earned from it’s sale will be used and hopefully for the good of all but it will be gone and one more tiny gem from our treasure chest of natural wonders - another share of our common heritage - will have been sold away.

Governor Brown, please help us protect this special strip piece of land from development and allow it to remain a part of the Oregon that still belongs to all of us.

If you happen to be unfamiliar with the property, I invite you take a moment from your busy schedule and visit it. Once you do see it I am sure you will be pleased and relieved to know that at least for now, it still exists as it has for generations.

Respectfully,
Eliott Brody - Northeast Salem resident
November 2, 2016

Eliott Brody

Dear Mr. Brody:

Governor Brown shared with us your interest in the former North Campus of the Oregon State Hospital. I’d like to share with you some background on the property, its current status, and the process going forward.

Background:

In 2012, the Oregon Health Authority vacated the North Campus. This property was transferred into the ownership of the Oregon Department of Administrative Services (DAS).

In 2013, DAS contracted with the Leland Consulting Group for an analysis of the property. Leland indicated that the buildings on the campus, with the exception of the Dome Building, were functionally obsolete and of zero economic value, and recommended demolition of all buildings except the Dome Building.

The community indicated a desire to find productive uses for both the Dome Building and neighboring Yaquina Hall.

During the 2015 Session, the Oregon State Legislature directed DAS to spend up to $8.3M from its existing capital construction and repair budget to remove hazardous materials (asbestos, lead paint, etc.) from the tunnels and all buildings except for the occupied office space (floors 1-3) in the Dome Building, and to demolish all buildings and tunnels except for the Dome Building and Yaquina Hall. The Legislature’s instruction to DAS is to prepare the property for sale for redevelopment, and use sale proceeds to fund the $8.3 million of capital construction and repair projects on State-owned buildings in Salem, Portland, Eugene, and Pendleton which have been postponed.

Current Status:

DAS received an unsolicited offer this summer from a development group that wanted to reuse the buildings east of 25th Street—something they couldn’t do if we were in the process of demolition. So, consistent with state law requiring us to publicly offer State real estate for sale, we sought proposals on the developable property (everything except the Dome Building, Yaquina Hall, and their grounds). This was by necessity a very short offering, only thirty days long.

The proposals we received either did not meet DAS’s need to meet our financial responsibility to Oregon taxpayers or did not respond to the community’s needs.

After a discussion with the City of Salem, DAS declined all proposals received and will proceed with demolition of the buildings east of 25th Street. We will continue working with the City of Salem to streamline the development of the site through a traffic impact analysis, phased
subdivision, and establishment of a development district. DAS will also be gearing up for a more extensive marketing effort in partnership with the City of Salem.

**Yaquna Hall Status:**

DAS is in the process of selling Yaquna Hall to Salem Housing Authority.

**Park Use:**

The City of Salem, Representative Brian Clem, and the NESCA neighborhood association have all expressed interest in acquiring a portion of the North Campus for park use. DAS remains engaged in conversations with them on this matter. While additional park space in this location is not part of the City of Salem Parks Master Plan, we recognize that redevelopment of the North Campus will increase the need for open space in the neighborhood, and are committed to working with the City to ensure that a park of appropriate size is included on the site.

**Further Information:**

Statutes governing the sale of State property are in ORS (Oregon Revised Statutes) Chapter 270, and administrative rules (which give more detail) are in OAR (Oregon Administrative Rules) Chapter 125, Division 45. All are available online at Oregon.gov.

Information about the North Campus, including the appraisals and the Leland study, may be found at [http://northcampus.oregon.gov](http://northcampus.oregon.gov).

We do not have any public meetings scheduled in the near future, but will continue to come to neighborhood and other meetings, both upon request and to give periodic project updates. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Shannon Ryan, Administrator

cc: Leith Parson, Office of Gov. Brown