

Dear Interim Director Emery,

We are writing to express our support for the Seattle Department of Transportation's (SDOT) implementation of the community's Fortson Square vision, which necessitates the removal of two existing trees within the space. This project aims to realize the community's vision for an improved public space and a welcoming eastern gateway into Pioneer Square by offering greater opportunities for cultural and community gathering, providing a better connection to Chief Seattle Club's ʔÁŁʔAL building, and creating a space that honors the Coast Salish people.

As part of this transformation, we support the removal of the two interior trees at Fortson Square to create a more open, accessible, and functional public space. The current placement of these trees presents challenges related to grading, accessibility, and overall site usability. Their removal is a necessary step in fully realizing the community's vision for this space. Site preparation for removal will also include rodent abatement, addressing an ongoing issue within the space as part of the overall redevelopment effort. Furthermore, the removal of these trees provides an opportunity, through the established guidelines on tree removal and replacement, to improve nearby urban tree canopy.

We also note that the Pioneer Square Preservation Board has reviewed and approved a Certificate of Approval for the project, including the removal of the two trees, which demonstrates wider community support for this project.

Rooted in deep community engagement, this project is more than a redesign—it is an opportunity to create a public space that reflects the cultural and historical significance of this site. The new Fortson Square will be the first public space in the city designed to reflect Indigenous culture, ensuring that their presence and traditions are represented in the urban landscape. The additional light and openness created by the removal of the trees will also support healthy native understory plantings – a valuable opportunity to reinforce the cultural identity of the space with plantings that are not commonly found within dense urban environments. By creating space for gathering, storytelling, and cultural programming, the design strengthens connections to the neighborhood and improves visibility and accessibility for all visitors.

We appreciate SDOT's commitment to advancing a project that reflects the needs and values of the community, and we look forward to continued collaboration as Fortson Square moves toward construction.

Sincerely,



James Lovell

Interim CEO

Chief Seattle Club



Lisa Howard

Executive Director

The Alliance for Pioneer Square