



## ADVOCACY LETTER TEMPLATES

### **Template for Seeking Historic Designation**

Each state has a historic preservation office, and many keep registers of historic places. You can find your state's historic preservation office [here](#) to determine whether it has a register and whether your park or landscape qualifies to be on it. The following is a bare-bones template for a supporting letter for a nomination.

Dear [HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICIAL]:

The [NAME OF GROUP] supports the timely listing of [NAME OF HISTORIC PLACE] the [STATE] and National Registers of Historic Places.

[NAME OF HISTORIC PLACE] played a significant role in [STATE] history. [GIVE EXAMPLES OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE].

Today, [NAME OF HISTORIC PLACE] contributes [CURRENT BENEFITS TO THE STATE].

Listing the [NAME OF HISTORIC PLACE] in the state and national historic registers is essential to ensuring that this treasured [TYPE OF PLACE] can continue to inspire and serve the public for the future.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

[NAME OF ORGANIZATION]

## **Template for Need for a Master Plan**

Dear [ELECTED OFFICIAL]:

The [NAME OF GROUP] supports creating a Master Plan for [NAME OF PARK OR DISTRICT].

We are writing to [GOVERNING BODY] on behalf of [NUMBER] advocates in [REGION OF MEMBERS] to request this timely action.

A Master Plan is both a practical tool for immediate action and an investment in our community's future.

The process of creating a Master Plan is important for defining our community's shared vision for the park and for ensuring that the community interests are fully reflected. The design and management of parks and public spaces benefit from an inclusive process rooted in community needs, history and culture.

Once completed, a Master Plan establishes a benchmark against which proposals and presentations may be judged and allows for the development of a sound capital-improvement program. It also provides continuity of vision as elected and appointed officials change. A Master Plan ensures that future leaders use scarce public resources wisely and for the benefit of subsequent generations, realizing that ongoing maintenance is essential to preserve natural and historical landscapes for future generations.

Finally, a generally accepted Master Plan will be critical to raising private and public funds to support [PARK OR DISTRICT]. It assures individual and corporate donors and taxpayers that their dollars will be used wisely and in support of well-defined goals.

In our efforts to sustain [park or district], we must envision and clearly define our goals. A Master Plan for [PARK OR DISTRICT] will do just that.

[NAME OF GROUP] is happy to discuss the importance of a Master Plan and what might go into it.

Sincerely,

[NAME OF ORGANIZATION]

## **Template for Need for Park Funding**

Dear [ELECTED OFFICIAL]:

[NAME OF GROUP] urges you to ensure that the parks in [LOCATION] receive the funding they need. On behalf of [NUMBER] advocates in [REGION OF MEMBERSHIP], we are writing to urge that [GOVERNING BODY] provide resources for the adequate upkeep of the parks.

Parks contribute to the physical and psychological health of cities and their residents. The importance of clean air and the role of plants, especially trees, in purifying the air are well known. In addition, well-kept parks help citizens feel that their community is a good place to live.

Parks also contribute to a community's financial prosperity. Parks often attract tourists who then spend their dollars in the community. They can also provide event venues that bring opportunities for local vendors. The ongoing care and maintenance of parks help create jobs.

Well-maintained and well-used parks also can save the city money in often subtle ways. Parks take the pressure off of aging stormwater infrastructure, for example, helping it last longer. And the demonstrated health benefits of parks and other public green spaces help reduce medical bills in ways that are real if hard to capture. Over recent months, we have surely seen the power of parks to provide respite in the face of a pandemic. In short, parks are good investments for cities.

We are aware of ongoing budget challenges and the need to stretch scarce resources to cover many needs. Those problems can make it tempting to defer park maintenance in favor of making other ends meet. But parks are not a luxury. They are critical infrastructure and contribute to our residents' health and well-being. The steady decay of park buildings, equipment and landscapes due to neglect is just as destructive, if not as dramatic, as damage from flooding, fires, or storms. In the long run, the decline of parks will cost the city much more than the sums saved in the short term.

[NAME OF GROUP] is happy to discuss the importance of greater funding further.

Sincerely,

[NAME OF ORGANIZATION]

## **Template for Concern About Road Construction**

Dear [ELECTED OFFICIAL]:

[NAME OF GROUP] write to express concern about the proposal to [build or widen] a road in [NAME OF PARK]. On behalf of [NUMBER] advocates in [REGION OR MEMBERSHIP], we are writing to urge that [GOVERNING BODY] very carefully consider the wisdom of such an action.

A park is not just an empty space. It is a place of recreation, of refuge from the stresses and strains of city life, a place for people to come together and see and socialize with one another in natural surroundings. In fact, a park often defines a neighborhood, with larger parks serving larger neighborhoods, some stretching beyond city or county boundaries.

An incompatible use in, or even near, the park can destroy it. No one would put a school playground in a library reading room or a hospital on an airport runway. These are all important facilities to have in a region, but they must be carefully located, so their uses do not conflict. Similarly, roads and parks should not be co-located lest the former destroys the latter.

A road would cut [NAME OF PARK] into segments, each of which may be too small to serve the intended purposes of providing people with a respite from city living and also a home and corridor for wildlife. Even if the remaining habitat is large enough to support a wildlife population, animals may venture into the road, with unfortunate consequences for themselves and unwary drivers.

The heat and pollution of vehicular traffic and snow-melting chemicals that may be used on the road can cause irreparable damage to the park's vegetation. Park officials across the country have discovered that road construction can offer a foothold in the park for invasive exotic species of plants that can soon overwhelm desirable native species. The kudzu vine, which flourishes in the southern United States, is one of such invasive species. Other states battle honeysuckles, grapevines, and a variety of others that come with roads.

[NAME OF GROUP] is happy to discuss alternative solutions to [REGION]'s traffic problems.

Sincerely,

[NAME OF ORGANIZATION]