

Southwest Portland Tool Library - the nuts and bolts



Tool libraries in brief

- Similar to a reading/media lending library, but for tools
- Should serve a local area to both control inventory and reduce travel
- Rental companies compete in this space with possibly greater availability at additional cost
- Model is closer to buy-nothing groups, but the library handles inventory and repair
- SWPTL (under SW Trails 501c3) serves west-side of Portland, volunteer staff Saturdays 9am-2pm, lends tools for 1 week period

Who benefits

- Community sustainability (reduce, reuse, recycle) via avoiding buying/storing/divesting of single-use tools
- Community resilience – known local cache of tools, work with NET groups
- Education opportunities – information on city permitting and departments, what to ask your contractor, DIY, conservation
- Advocacy and assistance around changing climate – insulation/cooling/wildfire smoke

Location, location, location

- Current location (in PBOT RoW) limits us to 160 sq. ft (20' container), which means we can't lend multiple/large items
- Preferred space would be 320-1000 sq. ft., as storage rather than storefront, only staffed less than a dozen hours a week
- Parking (2-3 spaces) and optional access to transit
- Inside space ideal with electricity, sink/restroom, external entrance
- 3 tool libraries are in churches, or containers in their parking lot
- Currently leasing, but cost-conscious, would rather spend money on tools requested