

Address to City Council
April 10, 2013

Good Morning,

My name is Chris Fountain, and I am here to speak on behalf of the trees in the Giant Sequoia Grove in Pier Park.

Since we learned that a Giant Sequoia was to be cut down to make room for a 65' ADA compliant trail section to be built off the south end of the new Pier-Chimney Park Bridge, we've been concerned about negative impacts on the Giant Sequoia Grove that were not anticipated during previous years of planning.

Why didn't we object to the cutting of the tree or the alignment of the 65' section before February, 2013? The simple answer is that we didn't know about either.

- There was never any notice in Pier Park informing park users of grove impacts
- The cover page on the Chimney/Pier Bridge web page never mentions grove impacts
- Friends of Pier Park never discussed grove impacts - or if they did, the discussion didn't make it into their minutes.

We trusted Parks to honor their mission statement of "establishing, safeguarding and restoring the parks, natural areas, public places, and urban forest of the city, ensuring that these are accessible to all." We have been disappointed.

Please refer to the **Timeline of One Example of Misrepresentation** pages in your folder. These sheets outline just one example of how important facts impacting the grove were not part of the public process. Despite telling us multiple times that the public **had** been included in the decision to cut the sequoia as well as how the 65' section would impact the grove, Parks recently admitted that this was not true. We have also discovered that little attention was given to alternatives to the 65' section option as it appears on the current construction plans.

There has also been much rhetoric about the fact that the 65' section is what makes the bridge ADA compliant, and that it's inclusion was required in order to have the project funded. If ADA compliance is important, consideration needs to be given to the following:

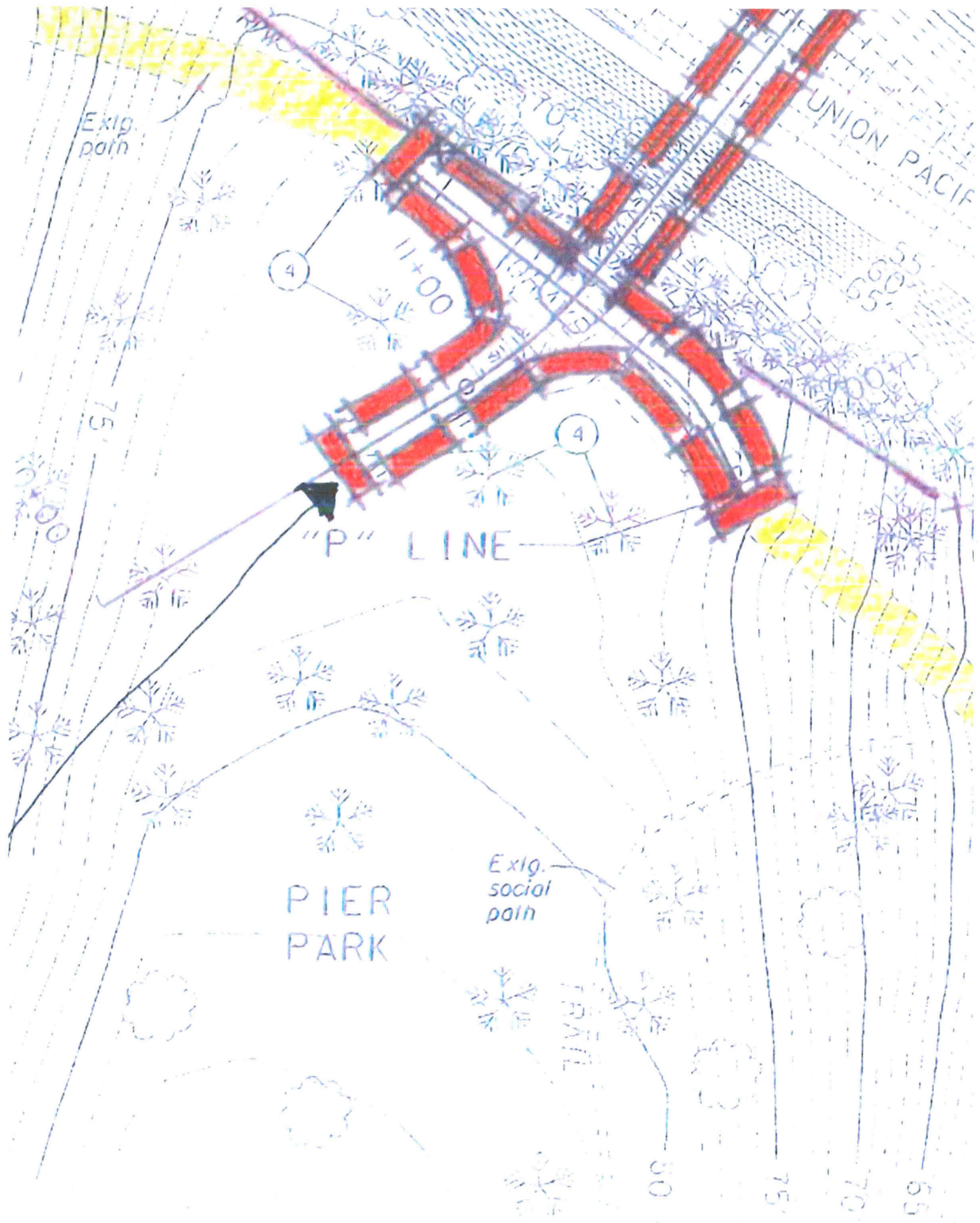
- Until this trail section becomes a part of a complete trail through Pier Park, this 65' is **NOT** ADA compliant, because it not accessible from Pier Park. If ODOT considers a dead end 65' trail section a compliant ADA trail, this is an insult to the ADA community. Parks has repeatedly stated that there are no plans to build a continuation of this section for many years.

- In Pier Park, there is a history of starting ADA projects that are never finished. Although an ADA restroom was scheduled to be built at Bruce and James in 1996, it has never been funded.
- Parks says, "This trail has not yet been designed. There is no funding at this time to continue work on the trail design." Yet I assume the trail alignment sketched on the NP Greenway section (please see the plan in your packet), which is billed as ADA compliant, played a part in the funding decision. As drawn, this trail goes through a dense section of sequoia, making this alignment impossible without cutting down more sequoia. Yet we are told no more trees will be cut.

When, if ever, will true ADA accessibility to the bridge become a reality? Or will we just be stuck with an ugly asphalt slab that was built for one purpose only - to meet ODOT requirements for bridge funding?

Thank you,
Chris Fountain

Member, Friends of Pier Park
Member, St. Johns Neighborhood Association
Portland homeowner, taxpayer, and voter



Timeline of One Example of Misrepresentation

Feb 8, 2013 - From Joanie Beldin to PP&R

"I see that where the sequoia is, there is a T-shaped "path"? going into the grove. Currently, there is no path there, nor anyplace for a path to lead. Currently, there are just openings between the trees that lend themselves to meandering and enjoying what I consider to be the sacredness of the grove. I am hoping that there is no plan to "develop" this grove.

Could you please explain the T-shaped "path"? - what is its purpose? Is it an opening for a potential turn around place for vehicles? Will it be paved? Are there any more impacts on the Sequoia grove in the works?"

Feb 8, 2013 - Email Received from PP&R:

"The T-shaped paths are to provide safe access to the bridge temporarily until the rest of the connection trails are designed and constructed."

March 1, 2013 - From Joanie Belden to PP&R:

"The 65' "path" from the bridge comes as a surprise. Prior to yesterday, the only design plan available to the public showed only a sketched "T" from the end of the bridge. I am forwarding an email I received in response to a question I had regarding that "T". Susan said it is a temporary access - however, there is nothing temporary about an asphalt path. I am feeling very misled on the bridge transition.

I have further questions regarding the 65' "path" from the bridge:

1. Is the "path" temporary? Is it something the Parks will undo when the trail design is complete?"...

March 4, 2013 - Frequently Asked Questions, PP&R Pier-Chimney Park Bridge Page

"Where will the new construction be?"

The trail will be paved 65' from the end of the bridge into the park.. This distance is required to meet ADA and provide a safe path off the bridge - the height of the bridge/path is 2.5' above the surrounding grade. The paved portion of the trail will be asphalt.

When will construction of the trail through the sequoia grove be completed?

This trail has not yet been designed. There is no funding at this time to continue work on the trail design.

We heard that a road is being built to accomodate fire trucks...

...The trail connecting to the bridge has not been designed."

March 10, 2013 - Email from Joanie Belden to PP&R

"I really will appreciate your clarifying why your email referred to this "T" as a place to provide safe access temporarily when in reality it represents an asphalt path which is usually not considered to be temporary construction. In addition, please help me understand why the design plans that were available on your website prior to Feb 28, 2013 did not reveal the 65' long transition path from the bridge."

March 11, 2013 - Email from PP&R to multiple persons

"Questions As of March 6, 2013

Q5. Was any of the outreach to the public in any other language besides English?

A. No

Q10. We have been told that the 65' length is required to meet ADA needs coming off the 2 1/2 foot rise from the bridge. In order to better understand ADA requirements, I spoke with an ADA representative. He informed me that there is a ratio of 1:12 in building a ramp. According to this specification, a ramp going from 2 1/2' (30") requires a 30' ramp with possibly a 5' landing. This would mean that a ramp 35' long would bring the ramp to ground level and satisfy ADA requirements.

A. This is not an ADA ramp, it is a trail. The ratio for a trail is 1:20

Q10. Will additional trees be removed?

A. Preliminary site investigations show that additional tree removal would not be necessary to build the park trail. Interested community members will be involved in future design work. We do not have a plan to design the trail in the near future."

March 19, 2013 - From Michael Barley to PP&R

"Dear Mark,

Thank you for sending the design plans that were presented at the Dec. 14th, 2011 Open House.

On March 4th, 2013, Elizabeth Kennedy-Wong added a Frequently Asked Questions link to your Pier Park web page. Under the question "How was the public involved in the bridge design?", she said "In December 2011, a public meeting was held to get input on the best alignment for the bridge. The public clearly stated the desire to minimize tree impacts. Each of the designs presented had tree impacts."

The above statement clearly implies that the public was shown a choice of designs. However, the document you sent me to satisfy my request for "presentation materials, including all design plans for the Pier Park/ Chimney Park Bridge Open House Public Meeting from /14/11", clearly does not show any choice of designs.

The plans that you sent appear to be fairly complete as though a decision had already been made concerning the placement of the bridge. In Elizabeth's statement quoted above, she says that several designs were presented to the public at the meeting.

Please send the other designs that were provided to the public."

March 20, 2013 at Friends of Pier Park Meeting

PP&R stated publicly that no input from the public regarding the alignment of the bridge or the 65' trail section had been solicited from the public, but that these decisions had been made in-house by PP&R.

March 26, 2013 - Frequently Asked Questions, Pier-Chimney Park Bridge - Updated 26 March

How was the bridge designed?...At the December 2011 open house, the public was asked to give input on the bridge finish and structure.

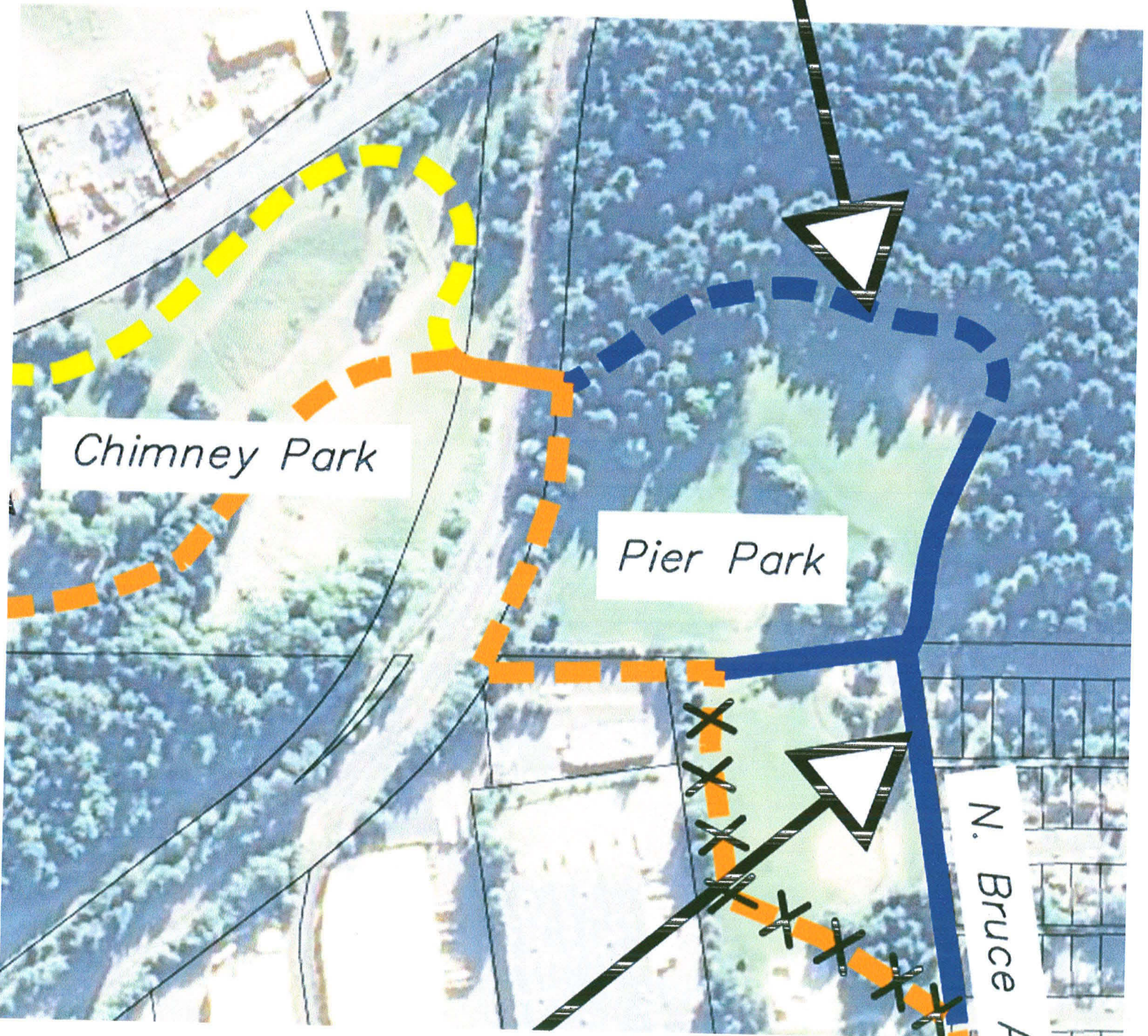
NOTE:

We have statements from several people who are particularly interested in the preservation of the trees in Pier Park who were in attendance at this meeting. These people state that they didn't see any drawings that night that indicated a sequoia tree was going to be removed, or that there would be a 65' trail section that would extend from the bridge into the sequoia grove.

Most park users were totally unaware that the tree would be removed until a sign was posted in the grove 10 days before it was removed, and were totally unaware of the impact that the 65' trail section would make on the grove.

8' ADA
accessible trail.

Plan section taken from
North Portland Greenway Trail Section 2
<http://www.portlandoregon.gov/parks/article/429521>



Teragan & Associates, Inc.

Terrence P. Flanagan

Arboricultural Consultants

April 8, 2013

Joanie Beldin
10223 N. Hudson St.
Portland, OR 97203

RE: Impact to Sequoia grove at Pier Park from new trail spur

As requested, I have reviewed the plans that call for a trail spur to run from the south end of a planned bridge from Chimney Park to Pier Park, and the impacts that construction of the bridge and the increased use may cause to a grove of Sequoia trees (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) where the trail dead ends. I completed a site visit on April 2, 2013 as part of the review of the project.

Concern #1 - During the construction of the bridge and the bridge's south abutment, damage may be caused to the trees that line the gravel road that is to be used for access to the project.

Number, type, and weight of equipment to be utilized to construct the bridge abutment and bridge needs to be considered. In addition, consideration should be given to where the equipment will be utilized in relation to the trees, as well as where the equipment will be located during the construction process. The plans show a limit of construction area, but there does not appear to be sufficient area set aside to allow for the staging of equipment and materials to construct the bridge and its south abutment, or enough area to allow the turnaround of equipment that will access the project.

There is no mention of how the stump from the removed Sequoia tree is to be taken out. Ideally, only the stump should be ground out with a stump grinder, not dug out with an excavator, nor should any of the roots from the stump be ground out beyond the main stump.

There are several surface roots in and adjacent to the gravel drive that is to be utilized by construction vehicles. There do not seem to be any steps proposed to protect those roots in the current tree protection plan.

There is a coastal redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) whose trunk is located just off the just south edge of the gravel road that will have to be protected as well.

The tree protection plan does not address the need to erect metal fencing to keep construction personnel from inadvertently entering the areas that should be set up as tree protection areas. All that is called for in the plan is "temporary orange plastic mesh" that is easily breeched by construction activity.

Concern #2 - The developed, hard surface path off the south end of the new bridge that dead ends into the grove of Sequoia

Construction of a new bridge will increase traffic in a grove that historically has not been subject to a high volume of human usage. Increased use will cause impacts such as soil compaction, damage to surface

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roots, and impacts to buttress roots and lower tree trunks from mountain bikes. With the dead end path inviting an increased number of pedestrians, bicyclists, and others to enter the grove without any direction to take, the concern is that over time, the impacts listed above will lead to the potential decline of the Sequoias. An improved path constructed through the grove with a defined destination would tend to keep users on the path, reducing the potential for soil compaction and other impacts.

One of the best designs for an improved path would be a concrete path that is re-enforced with rebar to create a surface bridge over the soil. Such a path would transfer the weight of any vehicle and distribute it over a greater area, thus reducing the point load, and reducing the potential of soil compaction beneath the path. Although such a design would not allow for precipitation to penetrate through the path, soil moisture will travel by osmotic movement from the sides of the path. While such osmotic movement might not allow the center of the path to receive enough moisture for root growth, the majority of the area beneath the path should be fine, with soil moisture levels high enough to support root growth.

With a dead end path, pedestrians, bicyclists, and other users could disperse throughout the grove, potentially causing wide spread soil compaction. In contrast, continuation of a paved path through the grove would direct people through the grove, lessening the potential of soil compaction within the grove.

If the continuation of the path construction is not scheduled at the same time as the construction of the bridge, then the spur should not be constructed to insure that the possibility of soil compaction or other impacts to the trees does not occur.

The plans call for a new Sequoia to be planted just to the southeast of the proposed path. I question how well a new Sequoia would thrive under the shade of the neighboring Sequoias, as the species is not shade tolerant. Also, the path of an irrigation system to supply water to the tree would have to be designed to avoid the roots of nearby trees. Given the cost involved with supplying water to the tree and the possible impacts to nearby roots as well as the survivability of the tree, I question whether or not a tree should be planted within the grove.

In order to better protect the long term health of the grove of Sequoias just off the south end of the proposed bridge, either a continuous path should be planned for and carefully installed between the trees at the same time of the trail spur construction, or the spur path should not be built until such time as a complete review of the impacts to the trees and the area can be completed.

As this is an initial review limited in scope, there may be other information that I have not been made aware of that may impact the statements above.

Please feel free to contact us to discuss any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Terrence P. Flanagan
ISA Board Certified Master Arborist, #PN-0120 BMTL
PNW/ISA Certified Tree Risk Assessor, #PN-0152
Member, American Society of Consulting Arborists

Parsons, Susan

From: Chris Fountain [cfount@earthlink.net]

Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2013 8:52 AM

To: Parsons, Susan

Subject: 4/10 City Council Communication

Hi Susan,

I have requested a slot (next to another speaker, Joanie Beldin) to present the reasons why the 65' trail that extends off the Chimney/Pier Park bridge should be redesigned to avoid encroaching on the Giant Sequoia Grove in Pier Park. I'll look forward to your confirming email.

Thanks,

Chris

Chris Fountain

503-285-4322

cfount@earthlink.net

Request of Chris Fountain to address Council regarding the trail off the
Chimney/Pier Park bridge and the Giant Sequoia Grove (Communication)

APR 10 2013

PLACED ON FILE

Filed APR 05 2013

LaVonne Griffin-Valade
Auditor of the City of Portland

By 

COMMISSIONERS VOTED AS FOLLOWS:		
	YEAS	NAYS
1. Fritz		
2. Fish		
3. Saltzman		
4. Novick		
Hales		