



Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
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MEMO A-25

DATE: May 1, 2020
TO: Planning and Sustainability Commission
FROM: Jeff Caudill, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
SUBJECT: Future Plans for Ross Island

ISSUE SUMMARY

Some PSC commissioners requested additional information on future plans for Ross Island. This memo summarizes recent projects focused on Ross Island and describes expected future Ross Island activities by Ross Island Sand and Gravel and State of Oregon agencies.

BACKGROUND

Harmful algal blooms (HAB) were observed in the Ross Island lagoon in four out of the five years between 2014 and 2018. HABs are toxic to both humans and pets and create a health risk for river users. In response to the increased frequency of HABs in the lagoon, the Human Access Project, a swimming advocacy organization, worked with a professor at Oregon State University to evaluate options to address the issue as an engineering student project. The results of that effort were presented in October of 2019 and identified a handful of potential viable solutions.

In addition to the HABs work completed at OSU, an intern at the Oregon State Department of Environmental completed a review in the summer of 2019 of the regulations currently applied on Ross Island. This review unearthed a multi-faceted regulatory environment with varied objectives and recommended that a more wholistic reevaluation of Ross Island be conducted.

FUTURE PLANS AND PROJECTS

BPS staff met with Ross Island Sand and Gravel (RISG) staff at a number of points through the planning process to discuss the River Plan / South Reach and its proposals, and to gather feedback from RISG on any future plans they have for the island or their headquarters located along SE McLoughlin Blvd (both properties are in the South Reach planning area). RISG informed BPS staff that they expect to continue



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to operate on the island for the foreseeable future and have no plans to stop processing activities there. RISG is obligated to continue implementation of their existing Department of State Lands (DSL) Reclamation Plan, last updated in 2002, and must continue their mining reclamation efforts until the plan targets for habitat restoration and fill are achieved.

In the fall of 2019, various Ross Island stakeholders began discussing the possibility of developing a renewed long-term vision for the islands. During those discussions, the State of Oregon Regional Solutions team was contacted. The Regional Solutions team then facilitated a few meetings to explore the creation of a new Regional Solutions project focused on Ross Island.

Based on those discussions, the assessment phase of the Regional Solutions process was initiated was initiated in late 2019. In an assessment such as this, existing conditions are reviewed, stakeholders are interviewed and the Regional Solutions team makes a recommendation on whether the project should move forward. As of April of 2020, the Regional Solutions had completed an abbreviated assessment and prepared an internal draft report with recommendations for moving forward. A final decision by the Regional Solutions team on the next steps for Ross Island has not been made due to other priorities, including the COVID-19 pandemic, and is not expected before summer 2020

