

Testimony for Planning and Sustainability

Good evening, I am Dan Yates, President of Portland Spirit cruises. We operate 5 vessels, perform about 2,000 cruises annually and employ over 200 people. I have built three docks in the Central City.

I am concerned that the 2035 draft in its current form will mean Portland will miss a generational opportunity to allow the Willamette River to realize its true potential. The current draft has failed on several key areas and those areas are expounded on in my written testimony.

I want to highlight one key area of concern. Water based transportation has been included in the current draft planning documents. Our location at 110 SE Caruthers is adjacent to a major intersection of light rail, bus lines, bike trails and streetcar and is an ideal location for a river terminal. It is the last location in the Central City that can base, service and load a large fleet.

The 2035 draft allows only a terminal that is fatally flawed. We need to think of the terminal from the perspective of its customers. We know that they do not want to wait in the rain or heat, they expect assistance for the infirm, restrooms, a place to sit, be able to get a drink, get information, bike storage, luggage storage, buy a ticket/check-in and be safe. As the operator I need space for management, security, machine shops, food storage, food production, sales, trash, storage, and customer service.

Our current location has a 5,000 square foot waterfront facility and a 4,800 square foot machine shop with over 400 feet of dock and these building facilities are inadequate for our current demands. Our dock has capacity for about 12 more vessels. The current draft proposes limiting our location to a 5,000 square foot floor plan for a terminal and is based on our use at Salmon Street and its 60 feet of dock and our loading of a single vessel. I have provided in June 2016 to the city what I believe should comprise a full service terminal and that is much larger space (about 50,000 square feet). Many cities have wonderful waterfront terminals that are a source of pride to their city and Portland deserves nothing less.

The Willamette is the last great free right-a-way in Portland and like the streetcar, water transit is going to return to Portland. The 2035 plan acknowledges water transit is possible, now we need to mesh the planning with the zoning code and plan for success. We need a terminal that will service riders for the next 20 years, not one that is undersized out the gate.