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Sent: Tuesday, August 09, 2016 4:15 PM

To: Planning and Sustainability Commission <psc@portlandoregon.gov>

Subject: CC2035 plan testimony - enhance the Willamette for People and Wildlife

I am a member of the River Huggers Swim team and I love the Willamette River. Let's make sure the comp plan celebrates this wonderful city asset. I would like to see more accessibility to the river by swimmers and non-motorized water craft. Public outreach is needed to help people understand the river is safe, rather than dirty and polluted as it's reputation has been for years.

The Willamette River is owned by the citizens of Oregon and is Portland's largest public open space. By Portland Parks and Recreation estimates only 5% of our Central City has access to the Willamette River. Collectively our community paid \$1.44 billion to largely remove sewage overflows from the Willamette River, that is why we have among the highest sewer bills in the country. There is no disagreement, scientifically speaking, that the Willamette River is now safe for swimming. Much work lies ahead to improve the full ecological health of our river, but today we can celebrate that we can swim in the river that flows through the center of our town.

As Portland's relationship with our river improves, the DNA of our city and our most vital of values, livability, will change with it for the good. Naturally, the facilitation of getting people to the river's edge and into the river will foster a stronger relationship with the Willamette River and stewardship. There will also be economic returns with increased visits by residents and tourists to our river. People are drawn to rivers with healthy ecosystems. Human Access and habitat restoration must go hand in hand.

Feedback on 2030 Plan. Specific comments.

- Establish Guidelines for Swimming in the Willamette River. We want the Willamette River to be safe and welcoming for people of all ages and disabilities. The 2035 plan calls for swimming throughout the document but provides no direction about how to do it safely. Portland Parks and Recreation needs to have an increased role and leadership in developing policy as it relates to recreation in the river. This needs to happen as soon as possible to reduce the clear exposure to the city – there is currently no policies in place that direct people how and where to swim.
- No net loss of river edge access in the central city By PPR estimates only 5% of the central city as access to the river's edge. It's difficult to build new docks, the existing facilities we have in the central reach need to be protected and preserved.
- Structures in Parks - We do not like the idea of permanent structures in any parks. We like the idea of temporary structures such as food carts. It provides more flexibility, specifically at the waterfront there is an extreme deficit of green space – we don't want any more space eaten up permanently. That said it would be nice to be able to have economic activity in parks to serve people, it would be a nice amenity.
- Rethink turf management in Tom McCall Bowl – current policy needs to be reexamined. This needs to happen in the short term and can happen independently of any master planning at Tom McCall Park. When there is not an event at this space PPR is constantly watering and seeding. When this area is saturated with water it cannot be used, and the seed and grass is just food for the geese.

- 50 foot set back – 50' is the minimum acceptable setback, this setback needs to be 75' to provide a proper buffer for wildlife and recreation. Portland needs to make a decision about what defines our city what are the values of our city. As Portland grows we will need greater relief from our growing built environment.
- Riverfront Open Space Bonus – Either adding a second approach which would add robust access to the river with support facilities, laidback banks and other tests as determined by the Portland Parks and Recreation -- once Swimming Guidelines are established (HAP point #1). Alternatively, creating access to the waters edge could be integrated into the existing density bonus which a less robust test.

Thank you for your consideration.

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