

8 21 2016

To: John Core and Shannon Buono
From: Mike Houck
Re:: Zoning Map Trail Alignments

John and Shannon,

I am following up after having reviewed your August 16 memo to the planning and sustainability commission and having met with Jim Sjulín of the 40 mile loop Land Trust over the weekend. Before I get into my follow-up questions and comments I would like to compliment staff on having followed up with the 40 Mile Loop Land Trust as requested at the last PSC hearing. The Trust has been involved in planning for the 40 Mile Loop and other local and regional trails within the city of Portland and throughout the Portland Vancouver Metropolitan region. The land trust, in addition to having been involved in trail planning for over 30 years, has had professional trail and transportation planners as well as landscape architects since its inception. Therefore, I place a very high level of credibility on their input.

I also want to compliment staff on what sounds like, based on my conversation with Mr. Sjulín, that staff took the land Trust's input seriously and agreed on many of the points raised by the Trust. That said, there are some issues that remain outstanding that I would appreciate having a conversation about and, if necessary, addressing at Tuesday's Planning and Sustainability Work Session.

1). Trails outside city limits: staff did not agree with the Trust's request to designate trails outside city limits, based on the fact that the city does not apply zoning outside its jurisdiction. While that is a reasonable response, and true, I see no reason why, as the trust has suggested, that a different color or other distinguishing feature could not be applied to the gaps that appear, which disrupt continuity of the city/regional trail network. Why could the city not add commentary it simply stated that particular gap which appears within another jurisdiction is part of an adopted regional trail network and that it appears on the map as a means of describing a truly integrated city/regional trail network?

I would urge staff to reconsider its position in this regard. A trail network can only function when there is connectivity. In some cases trail alignments are well-known and quite likely to be built. In others they are aspirational and the fact that they appear on a map is a significant step toward creating, in fact, a connected integrated trail network. Staff could refer to Metro's formally adopted bi-state regional trail plan for the Portland Vancouver Metropolitan region and other local jurisdictions trail planning documents to demonstrate the intent to create a truly connected trail system.

2). Private property: Staff disagrees with the Trust's that trail alignment should be shown on private property based on the statement, "the city should be confident that the trail should be located within the boundaries of the site before applying the trail designation." Again, the reality of local and regional trail planning is in many cases there is no certainty on the exact alignment. However, it is critical to show connections even if they are uncertain. The fact of the matter is given current legal issues in most cases a negotiation with the private property owner would have to happen before any final trail alignment is arrived at. Therefore, it cannot be argued that there would be a "taking" of private property by simply indicating a potential trail alignment.

3). The Willamette Shore Trolley/Trail Alignment: Staff does not agree with the Trust's recommendation to add this segment of trail along the trolley alignment between Portland and Lake Oswego. The basis for disagreement is that "Metro will be doing the planning for that potential trail in the future. We do not know yet where it is going to go and on which properties." While that statement is correct, once again indicating a potential trail alignment which has for some time been a priority for the regional trail network will assist in bringing that alignment to reality. As for which properties the trail may or may not go on, in reality there's only one likely alignment, which would be along the existing rail line. I urge staff to reconsider not adding that alignment and, furthermore, would urge that the city of Portland indicate to Metro that this alignment is a high priority and planning should commence as soon as possible within the context of Metro's regional trail planning process.

4). Columbia Slough Alignments: Staff states that the Columbia Slough alignment changes are result of Portland Parks and Recreation and PBOT more recent planning processes. What planning processes have resulted in the significant changes in alignments along the Columbia Slough? The original concept for the 40 mile loop trail alignments were to have parallel sections of the loop, one of which would be paved and runs along N. Marine Dr. the other of which would be soft surface parallel in the Columbia Slough. The new alignments depart significantly from that original vision. There may, in fact, be a good rationale for those changes--- in particular protecting significant natural resources such as riparian habitat and wetlands--- but the 40 mile loop land trust is unaware, as I am, of what planning processes resulted in the changed alignment.

5). Willamette Greenway and Industrial Lands: I understand the rationale for not showing and alignment through an industrial area. However, I do not understand why, in the service of connectivity, the trail cannot be shown around the industrial area?

Other Issues:

Connections in General: while I will not get into every nitpicky connection or lack thereof, I would like to strongly urge that connectivity be first and foremost in any

decisions regarding additions or removal of trail alignments. Connectivity is crucial to creating a vision for an interconnected trail network and for its eventual realization on the ground. I guess I'd call for applying the precautionary principle in this regard. When in doubt put on the map even if it means adding caveats such as I discussed above.

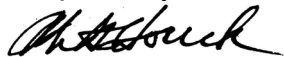
Green Loop: it seems to me, again with regard to connectivity that the 40 mile loop land trust comments might be integrated into continue planning on the green loop, either as part of the central city 2035 comment time or future planning.

Columbia Slough Alignment:

Broadmoor Golf Course, I strongly agree with staff decision regarding moving part of the alignment to the Metro and city of Portland owned property to the North and connecting to Northeast corn foot across the eastern edge of the golf course.

Oregon Steel: I strongly agree with staff decision to leave the alignment on the south side of the Columbia Slough at Oregon Steel. I participated in the process that Metro referenced by city staff regarding moving the alignment to the South to avoid impacting the Bald Eagle nest and a large Great Blue Heron nesting colony on the south side of Smith Lake.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Houck". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mike" being more prominent than the last name "Houck".

Mike Houck