

WILLAMETTE PARKIF YOU WISH TO SPEAK TO CITY COUNCIL, **PRINT** YOUR NAME, ADDRESS, AND EMAIL.

NAME (print)

ADDRESS AND ZIP CODE

Email

~~Wardell Gibson~~

10104 SE HAROLD ST 97266

wardellgibson@gmail.com

13320 SW Allen Blvd #102

Beaverton OR 97005

bernadette.j.leo@gmail.com

~~W.G. Hardy~~

ISSUE: YOUTH SUMMER JOBS

~~Elsah~~

MEEK High School

James Gorter

8041 SW 8<sup>th</sup> Pkwy 97219

jcgort@msn.com

~~Shauna Williams~~

11449 SE Bush St. Portland, 97266

Shaunawilliams27@yahoo.com

Mike Dowd

0753 SW Miles St.

dowdarchitecture@gmail.com

February 5, 2013

Portland City Council  
1221 SW Fourth Avenue  
Portland, Oregon 97204

**Re: Problems with Parks Bureau's proposed routing of commuter bikes in Willamette Park off of the east trail (Greenway Trail) and onto the south and west trails**

Dear Mayor and Council Members:

I oppose adoption of the Redevelopment and Phasing Plan for Willamette Park as a guide for future development of the park in regard to the portion of the plan which recommends redirecting commuter bikes off the regional Willamette Greenway Trail along the river, and onto the park trail which runs directly in front of my home.

I was a member of the Parks Bureau's Advisory Committee for the Redevelopment Plan. I believe the Parks Bureau staff and other committee members have the best interests of the park in mind, but there was inadequate time to review the impacts of the circulation changes, and the objections described here were either not discussed at all, or only very superficially in the development of the plan.

Here is the situation and why I object to the proposed trail changes:

**Situation**

At the loop trail that circles the athletic field at the south end of Willamette Park, most cyclists currently use the east trail (the Willamette Greenway Trail) along the river. Parks intends to direct them--through signage and a redesigned entry into the park from Miles Place--off of the east trail and onto the south and west portions of the loop trail. It's a fine concept, but it doesn't work, and it's a waste of money.

**1. Doesn't accomplish its intended goal:** Rerouting is intended to separate fast cyclists from pedestrians by directing the bikes off the riverside Greenway Trail. But Parks misunderstands how the trails are used. Most pedestrians don't limit themselves to the riverside trail--they use the park's entire south loop trail. The number of pedestrians using the whole loop is not significantly different than the number using the riverside portion. All the rerouting does is transfer any conflicts between the two uses from the east side of the athletic field to the west side.

**2. Increases rather than decreases conflicts:** Not only will the rerouting not accomplish its intended goal of reducing conflicts, it will increase them. Currently, cyclists are free to choose whichever branch of the trail is less crowded. With the rerouting, they will be directed to the west trail even if it is crowded with pedestrians

while the east trail is empty. That makes no sense. Cyclists should be free to use their own judgment.

**3. Less safe and convenient for bikes:** Currently cyclists are free to exercise their own judgment and use whichever route works best for them. If the west trail has pedestrians or other cyclists on it and the east is empty, they may use the east trail. There are many other equally good reasons why a cyclist may prefer staying on the east Trail--if the west trail has leaves on it and the east doesn't, or if they want to avoid peddling close to the west trail's houses, or avoid a park maintenance vehicle or worker on the west trail, or avoid a crowd standing on or near the trail watching a soccer game on the field, or avoid a loose dog or group of dog walkers, or avoid park sprinklers...and it's in everyone's best interest that the cyclists be allowed to use their judgment and choose the appropriate route.

Also, the east trail has safety advantages over the west trail. The east trail is completely flat and has no sharp turns. The west trail has both uphill and downhill sections, and a sharp (greater than ninety degree) turn at the southwest corner. The distance between the south and north points at which the east and west trails diverge (at the south entrance to the park, and at the pump station) is equal, using either the east or west trails--about .12 miles. So there is no distance advantage for cyclists using the west trail to overcome the grade and turn disadvantages.

Furthermore, directing cyclists onto the west trail requires very sharp turns in and out of the park from Miles Place, and fairly sharp turns coming and going directly in front of the new pump station. Using the east trail, in contrast, requires (depending on direction and location) either no sharp turns or no turns at all.

**4. Illogical:** the same cyclists and walkers using the park trails share mile after mile of trails on both sides of the river (Willamette Greenway on west, Springwater on east). They share the Willamette Greenway Trail on SW Miles Place south of the park, and again at the north end of the park. Even if routing bikes to the west side of the park did separate cyclists from walkers (which it doesn't, per 1. above) there is no logic in taking those same cyclists who've shared miles of trail with the walkers, and routing them off the off the Greenway Trail for less than 200 yards--especially at a cost of several hundred thousand dollars (!) and negative impacts to the park, neighbors, cyclists, and walkers.

**5. Turns quietest corner of the park into a commuter trail:** The southwest corner of the park is the quietest corner of the entire park, and the one closest to residences--in fact the only part of the park that abuts residences. Of all the parts of the park to turn into a busy commuter route for bikes, this is the most disruptive to the character of the park, and to its neighbors. It also makes no sense to force cyclists--who after all are also park users--as close as possible to houses, when there is an often-empty scenic riverside trail only yards away.

**6. Greatest harm to park's residential neighbors:** The southwest corner of the park is also the one closest to residences--in fact the only part of the park that abuts residences.

Turning the south and west portions of the loop trail--that is only a few feet from the residences--from a route lightly used by cyclists into a busy commuter trail guarantees the maximum possible negative impacts to these neighbors. Proposed traffic counts--which were NEVER mentioned during development of the master plan--will have OVER 4,000 bikes per day using the trail in front of houses, vs. at most a few dozen daily today. My neighbors and I bought our homes knowing that we were not on the regional trail, but on a quiet park trail. This proposal runs the regional traffic off the regional trail and alongside our homes.

**7. Enormous cost:** rerouting cyclists onto the south and west portions of the loop trail requires the south entrance to the park to be rebuilt, and the south children's play area moved. Parks' cost estimate for this work is several hundred thousand dollars. This work could be drastically minimized or avoided if the rerouting is not done, with the money spent instead for much more important and beneficial projects in the park.

**8. Confusing:** Currently there is no confusion about who uses which trail because the whole trail is shared. There would also be no confusion if the proposal was to separate cyclists from walkers. But the proposal is for walkers plus some cyclists to use the whole loop, but other cyclists to use only the west side of it. And walkers will still mix with the fast cyclists, it'll just be on the west side of the field instead of the east.

Which cyclists will be directed to the west? Commuters? But many recreational bikers go much faster than many commuters. So a sign that says "Commuters" doesn't work. What about "Fast bikes"? The park already has signs asking bikers to slow down, because the trails are shared with walkers, children, dogs... a sign saying "fast bikers" contradicts that. Really, the sign should say, "Fast commuters and fast recreational bikers, but don't go fast! Plus walkers and runners, except that they can go either direction". Plus, remember, some recreational bikers--especially children--do laps on the loop trail. Unless Parks wants to prohibit that, they'll be mixed with the fast bikers, too.

So regardless of what the signs say, the result is a mix of fast and slow cyclists, runners and walkers on both sides of the field.

**9. Not needed:** Finally, there's no need for this. The south loop trail is lightly used and in fact empty most of the time. Even with greatly increased use, one side or the other of the loop will be empty or nearly so the vast majority of the time, the vast majority of the year. It makes no sense to direct cyclists off the route that many prefer, and onto a route they don't want to be on, that brings them as close as possible to neighbors' houses, creating the maximum impacts to residents, for the sake of keeping some cyclists off an often-empty section of trail that's less than 200 yards long. When you also consider that they are being directed onto the west trail even when walkers or other bikers are on it while the east trail is empty, it makes even less sense.

#### **Summary:**

Parks' idea is that this will separate commuter cyclists from pedestrians. The reality is that it will not. It will direct bikers off of the right side of the field and onto the left side,

about 50 yards away, at a cost of several hundred thousand dollars. This will separate fast bikers from the pedestrians and slower bikers on the right side of the trail, and mix them in with those on the left side. The total distance is about 150 or 200 yards--before and after that, for the majority of the trails on either side of the river, the same pedestrians and bikers will share the trail.

Plus, this proposal flies in the face of the whole idea of the regional Greenway Trail, which was established along the river to carry pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Taking the regional bicycle traffic OFF the regional trail, and putting it on the park trail, and right next to the parks' residential neighbors, makes no sense. Changing the entire nature of circulation on the regional trail deserves more thought than what has been given so far.

Most importantly, this proposal takes bicyclists' ability to use their own judgement in choosing the best and safest route away, and simply forces them to mix with pedestrian traffic on the west side of the park. I can think of much better ways to spend several hundred thousand dollars than to mix bike traffic with pedestrians on one side of the soccer field than on the other!

Respectfully submitted,

Dowd Architecture Inc.

Michael Dowd, AIA, President

October 31, 2012

Land Use Hearings Officer  
1900 SW Fourth Avenue, Suite 3100  
Portland, Oregon 97201

**Re: LU 12-145519 CU GW ZC AD PC# 11-135790**

**Letter in against pump station unless trail improvement work is removed from the project scope.**

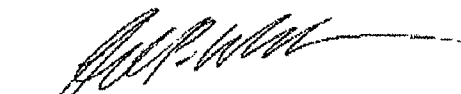
I own the home at 7355 SW Miles Place, at the south end of Willamette Park and directly affected by the proposed development.

Although, my neighbor, Mike Dowd has worked hard to minimize the negative effects of the proposed pump station through the various public hearings and public review sessions you've conducted, the city has not held similar hearings or addressed safety, noise, privacy concerns associated with the trail widening at the south and west portions of the loop trail (the trail portions nearest my house that connect to that east, riverside regional trail).

The trail widening is unrelated to the pump house project and should be removed from the scope of work to allow for proper public review and input. The trail work is inconsistent with intent and purpose of the Greenway Trail. The committee never discussed trail widening, never provided drawings showing trail widening, and never communicated that the trail would be widened--it is a separate project unrelated to the pump station.

I recommend that the trail improvement work be removed from the pump house project scope in its entirety or start over and resubmit the entire project for public review.

Sincerely,



Daniel P. Whalen, AIA  
Homeowner  
7355 SW Miles Place