

March 21, 2016

To The Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission:

We are Cathy & Jeff Knapp and live at 191 N. Lotus Beach Drive, Portland, OR 97217. We have recently learned that the City of Portland is considering changing the existing private walking path at the back of our property along the water to a combination walking and bike path. The following is our TSP testimony.

This is a path used continually by walkers, baby strollers, runners and dog walkers. It is common to see people having a leisurely walk with coffee and friends. It is a narrow path that hardly allows for people passing in each direction and certainly is not wide enough for cyclists and anyone else. It would not be safe to combine cyclists with small children and dogs in a narrow space, let alone the unpredictability of the large flocks of geese that are common along the path. It is difficult to get out of the way if needed because one edge of the path is at the edge of the high bank of the river and does not allow room and the other side is either uphill or covered with shrubbery. Other safety concerns are that the current path is very uneven and broken up as well as the lights along the path are low lights designed more for ambience and not enough light to make it a lighted path.

We have had personal experience with walking paths that have been converted to a combination walking path and bike path in the Redmond, WA and Seattle area. It did not take long for the walkers, runners and dog walkers to stop using the path as they no longer felt safe to do that with the cyclists on the same path. It soon became a cycling corridor and stopped being a path for foot traffic. We have no doubt this would be the situation if a bike path were added to our current walking path.

This path is separated from the road traffic flow and has only about 4 access points which makes it not well known. It was designed to be used mainly by people living in the neighborhood on the island. Increasing the public traffic along this path could bring an increase in theft and vandalism which brings a security threat to the homeowners. The limited access to this path also makes it a difficult access for the Portland Fire Dept. in case of emergency along the path.

Overall, changing this path to a combination walking/bike path exposes the public to potential injury and creates a liability conflict to the homeowners who pay to maintain and insure the property.

Why do all of this when there is already a wonderful 12 mile bike path along Marine Drive that is just a couple of miles from the island? It is easily accessible from both 205 and I-5 and points in between. It is also not in the middle of a residential area and provides an opportunity to enjoy the river in a natural and safer setting for all who use the path. We would like to see your efforts placed on utilizing or improving an existing biking path rather than creating a new one.

Thank you for your consideration of the above.

Sincerely,  
Residents of Hayden Bay Homes  
Cathy and Jeff Knapp