

April 2, 2015

Commissioner Amanda Fritz and Commissioner Nick Fish
City of Portland
1221 SW 4th Avenue, Suite 220
Portland, OR 97204

Re: River View Natural Area

Dear Commissioners Fritz and Fish:

The Portland Parks Board provides a forum for public discussion and decision-making about park issues, bringing a citywide and long-term perspective to neighborhood-based matters in alignment with the recommendations of the *Parks 2020 Vision*.

In addition, members of the Parks Board regularly volunteer in public processes and on advisory committees involving important parks planning and design efforts. In August of 2013 when a Project Advisory Committee (PAC) was formed to advise the City on the creation of a management plan for the River View Natural Area (RVNA), Parks Board member Mauricio Villarreal joined the committee and served as a liaison for information back to the Parks Board. This effort continued through April of 2014, midway through the planning process timeline, when communications between the City and the RVNA PAC ceased.

In early March, after nearly a year of silence, the RVNA PAC and other stakeholders received a notice of policy changes regarding recreational uses at the 146-acre natural area, specifically a decision that mountain biking would no longer be allowed. Your letter of March 2 indicates that the two bureaus involved (Portland Parks & Recreation and the Bureau of Environmental Services) would continue to work together with the community to develop a management plan for RVNP. The project website indicates that dates for the next PAC meeting and an open house will be announced soon, with the goal of completing a management plan in the fall of 2015.

The Parks Board is concerned that the policy change decision made during the halted public process of the RVNA management plan results in circumventing community engagement and undermining the input of the PAC, the professional advice of the Technical Advisory Committee, and the Parks Board's role as an advisor to the Parks Commissioner and PP&R. Furthermore, we feel that this action is a missed opportunity for public agencies, stakeholders, and the public to partner in a transparent and collaborative spirit.

We would welcome an opportunity to discuss this matter with you, with the goal of understanding how and why this decision was made and why the PAC process was ceased last summer. We also hope to work with you to avoid similar pitfalls in the future.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Portland Parks Board

cc: Mike Abbaté, Patti Howard