

**PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION**

Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland

**ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES  
CITY OF PORTLAND**

working for clean rivers

# Community Open House notes

project River View Natural Area Management Plan

date 05/04/2015 time 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

present See below location: Multnomah Arts Center

subject Community Open House

## 1. Introductions

Attendees of the Community Open House (#2) met at the Multnomah Arts Center. The meeting was attended by members of the public, city staff, the consultant team, and members of the Project Advisory Committee (PAC), and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Public involvement facilitator Doug Zenn opened the meeting and introduced Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) Director Mike Abbaté, and the Bureau of Environmental Services (BES) Interim Director Jim Hagerman. The Directors welcomed the group and provided an update of the current planning process. River View Natural Area (RVNA) was acquired by two city bureaus, BES and PP&R, who partnered with the Trust for Public Land and Metro. The bureaus have made a substantial investment in restoring the natural area, and are coordinated in the planning process.

The meeting is not a public hearing and the goal tonight is to move the plan forward. For the purposes of the RVNA Management Plan, this meeting will only consider pedestrian use. Commissioner Fritz has requested a city-wide off-road cycling Master Plan, and the Mayor has proposed funding this year for the Master Plan. Director Abbaté encouraged the public to attend the upcoming budget meeting. Several attendees asked if it would be prudent to wait for the off-road cycling Master Plan to be complete before continuing with the RVNA Management Plan. The planning process will continue beyond the Open House. The TAC makes a recommendation that goes forward to the PAC. The PAC makes a recommendation that goes to the Bureau Directors. Minority reports can be forwarded to the Directors as well.

## 2. Overview of River View Natural Area and Clarification Questions

Emily Roth, PP&R Project Manager, welcomed the group and provided an overview of work to date. The planning team is continuing to work on Ecological Prescriptions for the site. The TAC developed site-specific Design Criteria, and reviewed a parking concept for half-street improvements along SW Palatine Hill Road because parking will not be available at Lewis & Clark College. An Access and Management Concept has been developed for compatible recreation access. The concept will be subject to field adjustments during the design phase. The trail layout for this concept was developed as if the site was a blank slate. The existing trails on the site are not built to any PP&R specifications or design guidelines. The trail system proposed is compatible with protecting the natural resources on site.

This concept was developed before mountain bikes were restricted on the site, and would be the same concept if the off-road cycling Master Plan moves ahead and mountain biking becomes an allowed use for this site. Emily then noted the Management Plan is being developed according to the Guiding Principles that were created by the PAC, and then she stated the principles.

Mary Bushman, Environmental Specialist with the Bureau of Environmental Services, presented a watershed map from the 2009-2010 River View Subwatershed report. The report identified the importance of the RVNA property, both city-wide and regionally, for fish habitat in the Willamette River. The site also contains Interior Habitat, which is defined as intact forested areas greater than 30 acres that do not contain roads or disturbances associated with them, according to the City's Terrestrial Ecology Enhancement Strategy (TEES). RVNA is one of the few areas in the city that provides Interior Habitat that is important for plant and animal species that are sensitive to disturbance. There is an opportunity to protect water quality at this site. The streams in RVNA are a source of cold water refugia in the Willamette River for Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed species of salmonids, which makes it an important site for protection. Mary showed a temperature map that showed that the water flowing from RVNA's streams are 10 degrees cooler than the Willamette River during the summer months. The City has an obligation to protect terrestrial and aquatic connectivity at RVNA.

Emily next presented the Natural Resource Function figure that depicts the Aquatic Function Area and Interior Forest in RVNA. The Aquatic Function Area covers roughly 75% of the site. In this area, streams, wetlands, and buffer areas influence water functions and provide a shaded and cool habitat. Interior Forest habitat is forested land that is greater than 30 acres and greater than 300 feet from the nearest road, as described in the TEES document. The Interior Forest is an important environment that is cool, dark, and windless, and is a critical habitat for native wildlife and plant species. Emily noted that Powers Marine Park is currently being managed as a natural area.

Attendees had the following questions/comments:

- Were mountain bikes allowed on-site during the date of the water temperature sampling?
- Please clarify the difference between access and use.
- Was the concept plan approved by the majority of PAC members? Yes, though not all.
- How do streams flow under Highway 43? Through culverts.
- Do you have any scientific data on how recreation uses affect water temperature?
- Are culverts under Highway 43 fish-passable, and who is responsible for the road? Connectivity for terrestrial species as well as fish is important. The City is in contact with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) regarding the culverts.
- Is there a known volume/quantity of clean fresh water flowing from the streams to the Willamette? The City has not collected flow data, but has documented that four of the streams are perennial (year-round) and that the RVNA streams are providing cold water to the Willamette River at Powers Marine Park.
- Clarify the TEES definition of a break in Interior Forest habitat. Break in canopy.

### **3. Trails and Access and Clarification Questions**

Steve Roelof, Project Manager with ESA Vigil-Agrimis, presented the Access and Management Concept. The team worked closely with the TAC and the PAC to develop the concept. The trail layout features one large and one small loop trail, based on direction from PP&R and feedback from the PAC in favor of loop trails. The concept depicts access points and a potential future connection to Powers Marine Park. Trails use switchbacks to allow for shallow, sustainable grades of less than 10 percent. The concept features two overlook areas, and a porta-let at the west side of the site. This is a planning-level layout of trails and features, and will be adjusted in the field to maintain a gentle and sustainable trail grade. Parking opportunities at Lewis & Clark College are no longer available, and a proposed parking concept has been developed for the east side of SW Palatine Hill Road. The concept includes

parking for up to 35 cars, sharrows for road bicycle traffic, stormwater management, sidewalk, bicycle parking, and new street trees where needed.

Steve noted one key component of the Design Criteria is to keep trails within 200 feet of the property boundary to protect the Interior Preserve from human disturbance. The design meets this criterion where practicable, although one area at the top loop varies from the criteria to accommodate children and people with limited physical abilities. Another key Design Criterion is to minimize the amount of stream crossings to protect aquatic resources. Bridges will be implemented at crossings to protect the movement of energy and materials through the streams. The trail layout avoids wetlands to protect this important resource.

Attendees had the following questions/comments and staff responses:

- Clarification that the parking concept is on the east side of SW Palatine Hill Road
- How much land in the natural area needs to be graded for parking concept? The parking will be in the street right of way.
- Will neighborhood stormwater be drained to River View? Stormwater from proposed half-street improvements will be treated and infiltrated in stormwater basins.
- Lewis & Clark security will continue to patrol the SW Palatine Hill Road area to ensure students do not park in proposed parking spaces.
- Will there be room in the parking concept for bicycles? Yes, bike parking will be provided
- Is the trail area that extends into Lewis & Clark property acceptable to the college? Yes
- Confirmation that proposed trails were planned as if the property was a clean slate. Yes
- Can you compare the density of trails here to the density of trails in Forest Park? No, Forest Park's trail system is from historic use.
- What is the estimated cost of implementing and maintaining the access concept? To be determined.
- The trail proposed near Highway 43 will be approximately 40 feet above the highway, which would be noisy.
- Will you be using trail grade reversals and what is the proposed outslope of trails? Follow PP&R guidelines
- What percentage of trails cross the riparian buffer? Need to calculate this.
- Do the proposed trails overlap with the existing trails? Only in a few places.

#### **4. Park Management Options and Clarification Questions**

Emily noted there will be an additional PAC meeting to discuss Site Management. There will be a TAC meeting in May about management issues, and then a PAC meeting. The discussion will address if dogs will be allowed in the natural area, use of seasonal or wildlife closures, whether competitive events are appropriate, what size of educational groups are allowed, and other site management concerns. The draft Management Plan document developed by the consultant team will be reviewed by the TAC, and the PAC also will provide recommendations. Project staff will then write a recommendation to the Directors on the plan. The Directors will finalize their recommendations at the end of November and present it to City Council at the end of the year.

#### **5. Community Comments and Discussion**

Attendees had the following comments/questions:

- I strongly support everything proposed including preserving interior habitat and limited access for experiencing nature and strongly urge the decommissioning of social trails where deep gullies are eroding the surface.

- Please consider traffic issues for increased volume that will be coming into Collinsview Neighborhood. Could project staff address this at a neighborhood association meeting?
- Concern that this process will create a trail system where different user groups will be in conflict on a single trail if biking is allowed on the site in the future.
- With a constrained budget and since you won't be reusing any current trails, would it be more practical to create a multi-use trail elsewhere and close the site to all uses?
- It is important that we are not divided over this natural area and it is good to get kids to help build trails.
- The site is an important opportunity to protect natural resources and the forest should be kept intact.
- Without known quantities of stream flows, we can't fully understand trail impacts on water quality or temperature.
- Please clarify if single-use trails serve as habitat breaks in the Interior Forest, as discussed during the PAC meeting. The Interior Preserve will protect breaks in habitat.
- Multiple attendees stated there needs to be more scientific data in regards to impacts of recreation on streams/water quality.
- Did the Commissioners make a decision to ban mountain biking based on project staff recommendations? No, this was a policy decision.
- A well-designed trail system can be safe and enjoyable for all. This plan sounds wonderful, except for the exclusion of mountain biking.
- Streams need to be the most important goal for the site as per \$6M investment from BES.
- Multiple attendees commented that they support dogs not being allowed on site. Dogs are a huge known impact. Metro typically does not permit dogs on their property and they hold an easement agreement with the City for this site.
- I am offering a commitment to mobilize enough money for trails, upkeep, and stewardship of this plan, if mountain biking is allowed.
- Sandy Ridge has logged greater than 40,000 visits. If you made RVNA into a mountain biking mecca, many people will come from miles around. We need a city-wide regional off-road cycling Master Plan to assess capacity.
- Not in favor of mountain biking in the natural area.
- The 146 acre site is too small to support mountain biking use.
- Support for dogs being allowed in the site and multi-use trails.
- Please consider moving parking and access to closer to Highway 43. ODOT will not allow parking and access from Highway 43 for safety reasons.
- Concern for increased traffic.
- Enthusiastic about connection from Sellwood Bridge.
- Former property owner requests refraining from entering the adjacent private property at River View Cemetery. It was trespassing when the Cemetery owned the entire site and access in the "mitten" area is still trespassing.

Doug and Emily adjourned the meeting, and thanked participants for attending. Emily encouraged attendees to provide comments on comment cards provided at the meeting and on the project website.

A response to some frequently asked questions from the Open House will be posted to the RVNA website at a later date.

Comment Summary from the Open House Questionnaire is attached.



## **River View Natural Area Management Plan – Open House #2 Comment Form Summary**

### **Overview**

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The second open house for the River View Natural Area Management Plan was held on Monday, May 4, 2015 from 5:30-7:30pm at Multnomah Arts Center, 7688 SW Capitol Highway. Outreach included a SWNI newsletter article, post on website, and emails to interested parties. The Open House was attended by approximately 65 community members. A paper comment form was provided at the Open House, and a similar version was posted online for two weeks after the Open House. A total of 84 comments were received.

The goals of the Open House were to share the Natural Area Resources and Access Concept maps and get feedback from the community on the maps and management options. The presentation included an overview of River View Natural Area (Watershed, Interior Forest, Natural Resources); Trails and Access; Park Management Options; and Project Schedule. Questions and comments were taken from the audience.

It should be noted that this report reflects the opinions of those who chose to participate. It is not necessarily representative of the broader community. This information, in addition to information provided by the Project Advisory Committee, Technical Advisory Committee, staff, stakeholders and others, will be used to inform the development of the final River View Natural Area Management Plan.

### **1. Watershed and Natural Resources:**

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**Wildlife habitat, watersheds, forest stands, and other ecological values are protected and enhanced by this plan.**

- Agree – 48%
- Agree Somewhat – 17%
- Somewhat Disagree – 14%
- Disagree – 13%
- Other – 3%
- No answer – 5%

**If Other, please specify:** One person mentioned they would rather see no trails or very limited trail access or. Other comments were mixed on the possibility of future bike use on trails. One person suggested a wide gravel path instead of a sidewalk. The stormwater treatment in the parking strip was noted as a good benefit. Concerns were expressed about having adequate budget for long-term maintenance and whether exclusion of different user groups would lead to an increase in invasive species and illegal camping.

### **2. Access Concept Map (Trails and Parking):**

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**I support the proposed access concept.**

- Agree – 29%
- Agree Somewhat – 13%
- Somewhat Disagree – 4%
- Disagree – 45%
- Other – 8%
- No answer – 1%

**If Other, please specify:** Many expressed that they would like to see mountain biking allowed, and others expressed concerned about parking on Palatine and impacts on neighborhood. A few mentioned that the port-a-potty might be unattractive for neighbors

**The access and proposed parking provides a benefit to the neighborhood.**

- Agree – 16%
- Agree Somewhat – 20%
- Somewhat Disagree – 7%
- Disagree – 43%
- Other – 11%
- No answer – 3%

**If Other, please specify:** Comments again mentioned that access should include mountain biking. Other concerned comments were focused on the parking such as proposing angled parking between trees (like at Lewis & Clark). Others were concerned about seeing an increase in traffic in the neighborhood especially if more user groups were allowed onsite and whether parking would be properly enforced.

**Recreational uses are compatible, sustainable, and innovative.**

- Agree – 23%
- Agree Somewhat – 14%
- Somewhat Disagree – 8%
- Disagree – 35%
- Other – 9%
- No answer – 11%

**If Other, please specify:** Many stated that mountain bike use could be sustainable. Other stated that they supported the emphasis on hiking as the primary use on trails. One person noted that even walkers can be in conflict with wildlife values.

**3. Management Options:**

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**Dogs at River View Natural Area:**

- Allowed on leash – 52%
- Not allowed – 29%
- No Opinion – 7%
- Other – 8%
- No answer – 4%

**If Other, please specify:** One person suggested allowing dogs on leash only in the upper section for neighborhood walkers. Another noted that the trails are near the exterior, so they felt this is less impactful. It was mentioned that dog walkers currently also use Greenwood Pioneer Cemetery and Tryon Creek. Another comment mentioned having a dog with them makes them feel safer. Others felt that dog users could use other sites rather than impacting wildlife & water quality and referenced the Parks dogs in natural areas policy.

**Should there be a port-a-potty onsite?**

- Yes – 42%
- No – 36%
- No Opinion – 14%
- Other – 7 %
- No answer – 1%

**If Other, please specify:** Some mentioned concerns about impacts on neighborhood and use by homeless people. Others questioned if this is a necessary feature to include onsite. Some suggested screening the port-a-potty in a wooden structure.

**If yes, should be it be at the location shown (by SW Brugger & Palatine Hill Rd entrance)?**

- Yes – 32%
- No – 31%
- No answer – 37%

**If no, the location should be:** Three options were suggested: 1) Closer to Lewis & Clark, near Palater & Palatine Hill; 2) Closer to Hwy 43/Macadam; and 3) Somewhere not viewable from road/neighborhood.

**I support seasonal closure of trails to prevent erosion and other issues**

- Agree – 48%
- Agree Somewhat – 25%
- Somewhat Disagree – 2%
- Disagree – 13%
- Other – 7%
- No answer – 5%

**What else would you like to share with us?**

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Regarding the ecology and wildlife, some suggested closing the park to all users. Others questioned why the stream buffer is so wide. Some commented on wanting to see interior of site protected and wanted more information on how existing trails will be decommissioned. Some felt this plan does a good job at protecting water quality and wildlife habitat. Many comments expressed support for recreational uses to include mountain biking, with suggestions such as one-way trail use or allowed bikes on certain days of the week. Others said they would prefer to see the site be only open to hikers for safety. One person mentioned that the trail near Highway 43 may be noisy. Neighbors of the site mentioned concerns about parking on Palatine Hill Road and the port-a-potty.

**How did you hear about this event? (Multiple answers were allowed)**

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- PP&R email – 19%
- Bike Portland – 14%
- SWNI – 12%
- PP&R website – 2%
- Other – 44%: NWTa, neighbors/friends, Collins View NA, Friends of RVNA, Nextdoor.com, email, Facebook.

**How often do you visit the River View Natural Area?**

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- Monthly or less – 37%
- Weekly – 35%
- Haven't been yet 11%
- Daily – 7%
- No answer – 11%

**How do you access the River View Natural Area? (Multiple answers were allowed)**

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- On foot – 39%
- By bike – 29%
- By car – 14%
- Haven't been yet – 8%
- No answer – 10%

**I am age:**

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- 15 & under – 0%
- 16-24 – 1%
- 25-34 – 14%
- 5-44 – 19%
- 45-59 – 24%
- 60-79 – 31%
- 80 & older – 1%
- No answer – 10%

**I am:**

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- Male – 51%
- Female – 37%
- Other/No answer – 12%

**How many children do you have living with you under the age of 18, and what are their ages?**

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- 1 child – 55%
- 2 children – 38%
- 3 children – 7%
  
- Age 3 & under – 8 children
- Age 4-6 – 5 children
- Age 7-9 – 4 children
- Age 10-12 – 10 children
- Age 13 & up – 10 children

**Regarding residence, I:**

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- Own – 81%
- Rent – 8%
- No answer – 11%

**I identify as: (Multiple answers allowed)**

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- Caucasian – 81%
- Latino – 1%
- Other / no answer – 18%

**My most frequently used mode of transportation is:**

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- Car – 42%
- Bike – 19%
- Foot – 15%
- Bus – 5%
- Other – 8%
- No answer – 11%

**Zip Code:**

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- 97219 – 49%
- 97206 – 5%
- 97202 – 4%
- 97217 – 2%
- Other / no answer – 40%