

Summary Notes from River Plan/South Reach In-River Recreation Meeting - 9/25/18, at the Center for Equity and Inclusion

Approximately 45 members of the public attended the meeting. City staff from the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS) and Parks and Recreation (PP&R) were present to facilitate the meeting, hear public comments, record comments and respond to questions from participants.

After a welcome and introductions, BPS staff provided a project overview, described the purpose of the meeting and the materials for discussion. Attendants then participated in one of four table discussions on in-river recreation access, improvements and resolving conflicts between users. The following highlights the comments made by members of the public.

TABLE 1 Discussion

ACCESS TO RIVER RECREATION AND NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS

- Overall
 - Fisher people would like a place to clean their fish
 - Provide boat washing stations
- Eastside
 - Oaks Amusement Park – A new multi-purpose dock for large commercial transport to/from the park, also would be used by small non-motorized watercraft. The beach area would be a swim area. Needs access and a greenway connection, including through Oaks Crossing to connect Sellwood Riverfront Park to Oaks Amusement Park riverfront.
 - Sellwood Riverfront Park – Expand existing dock to accommodate more uses. Add boat storage.
 - Ross Island to Holgate Channel – Obtain property for public use
 - Riverfront off-Brooklyn neighborhood – Create access to river and a beach
 - Portland Rowing Club – Might there be an opportunity to expand on existing docks for boat storage and use?
 - Spokane St. at Willamette River – Facilities/launch for non-motorized boats
- Westside
 - Staff Jennings site – Opportunity for a dock and watercraft launching
 - Pendleton St at Willamette River – There is an existing seasonal beach with good access for kayakers and swimmers
 - Powers Marine open space – Non-motorized boat access

MINIMIZING CONFLICTS – ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS

- Overall
 - Conflicts between various in-river users may be remedied by timing (e.g., many non-motorized water craft are in the river in the early morning)
 - May need more than one dock to accommodate the various user types, such as separate docks for motorized boats
 - River access can also come from the river, doesn't always have to be from land
 - Swim areas need delineated swimming areas (buoy lines) and a location where the river does not become narrow (i.e. hazardous wake).

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- Quantify effect of wake boat wave energy on riverbanks before investing money in infrastructure.

- Specific Issues and Potential Solutions

IN-RIVER ISSUE	POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS
1. Impacts of Wake Boats on non-motorized watercraft, floating homes and riverbanks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ State implements a no wake zone ○ Expand no wake zone seasonally to northern tip of Ross Island ○ City could have a wake boat size limit or wake limit on boats that launch from specific sites ○ Solutions should be based on science and data
2. River user conflicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Education could reduce conflicts (including ways boats can minimize wakes) ○ Media could be utilized to educate the public about boating safety ○ Special endorsement beyond boater's card based on weight of boat ○ Non-motorized boats should also have to be licensed. Then, these boaters would have representation on boating issues ○ Increased advocacy from public can lead to political support and funding ○ Signage could address safety at boat docks/launches; could be paid by private entities
3. Fishing lines interfere with swimming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Keep fishing areas separate from swim areas

Note – the river area between the southwest part of Ross Island and Toe Island on the south side is a shallow water area in the summer. The shallow water forces watercraft into the Holgate Channel or to the west side of Toe Island along the western riverfront; which can get congested with river activity.

COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT BIG IDEA FOR RECREATION

None provided

TABLE 2 Discussion

ACCESS TO RIVER RECREATION AND NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS

- Boat Docks and ramps
 - Good location for education, need more education about wake impacts

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- Want low freeboard docks like at Hawthorne Bridge for kayaks, outriggers, canoes and paddleboards, watercraft need not be carried over rails, at Sellwood Riverfront and Willamette parks. These docks also good for sunbathers
- Need parking (parking does exist at Sellwood Riverfront and Willamette parks)
- What are Portland Parks and Recreation's plans for Powers Marine Park? Beach isn't ideal, not good to build a dock
- Create human powered boat launch at SE Spokane St and river
- Oaks Amusement Park would like a dock, talking with rowing group/Portland Boathouse organization, would like to have some level of public access
- Staff Jennings site – add dock and swimming area, provide bus, bicycle and pedestrian access.
- Holgate Channel
 - Future of Ross Island Sand and Gravel? They plan to be there for 20 years. There is some access off trail. Not from car.
- Fishing
 - Seasonal fishing from banks of Sellwood Riverfront Park
 - Fishing at Powers Marine and Willamette parks
- Trails
 - Paths to river are old and need replacement on westside
 - No need for additional river access, we have plenty
- Motorized/Power Boats
 - Two places to launch: Swan Island and Willamette Park
 - Need more parking for trucks and trailers bringing boats to river
 - Fueling station – Only Multnomah Channel and Oregon City, should City and the Oregon State Marine Board create one in South Reach?

MINIMIZING CONFLICTS – ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS

- Houselessness (non-sanctioned liveaboards and trash, solutions – fund a ranger in summer months, and install floating porta-potties (like at blues festival))
- Boat wake issues
 - When Sellwood Bridge was under construction, boats had to slow down, which reduced wake impacts,
 - Need no wake zone
 - Not in favor of expanding no wake zones
 - Need education about wakes
 - Have Oregon State Marine Board forbid wake enhancing devices and enforce them
- Sellwood Riverfront Park
 - Dog leash laws need better enforcement
- Many more human powered boats than in other parts of the river
- Parking for all boating activities
 - Need to improve access for parking
 - Only 2 places to launch power boats in Portland – Swan Island and Willamette Park – how often is Willamette Park boat launch parking area filled?

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- Motorized Boating Safety and Impacts
 - Noise- unmuffled boats, can we lower the sound?
 - Two cigarette boats (yellow and red), noise and wake
 - Need enforcement of noise and wakes, noise ordinances for boats, solution – a Sheriff could be at a boat ramp with a decibel meter
 - Don't see Sheriff's boats often
 - For boating safety, need more regulation for boat rentals. Now one day rentals don't get much education or regulation
 - Who regulates what? Need a table that describes regulations and enforcement responsibilities
 - Jetboats do not cause harm to Powers Marine Park habitat because they don't displace that much water.
 - Jetboats and floating homes made a deal 12 years ago that jetboats would not speed by the floating homes
- Boating safety an issue, solution – education for all boaters and enforcement
 - Education when people rent boats and educational signage at docks and launches
- New access to the river conflicts with habitat
 - Cottonwood Bay is important habitat - don't allow public access through high habitat areas
 - Improve public access where it already exists rather than create new access points
 - Provide visual access to river instead of new public access
 - Need to figure out how to share the river and protect the environment
- Boat storage
 - Boats have been stolen from docks and marinas
 - 1,000 river users are losing lease at Portland Boathouse, will be looking for storage and river access
- In-river habitat with boating
 - Place water piers in river for nesting birds – design with flat top so birds can land on top
 - Acceptable uses in shallow water (doesn't disturb habitat)
- Greenway Trail
 - Replace signage along the Greenway to include education (rules) and how to follow trail

COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT BIG IDEA FOR RECREATION

- Additional viewpoints north of Willamette Sailing Club
- Add No Wake Zone south of Sellwood Bridge to/including Powers Marine Park
- 90 degree turn on Willamette Greenway Trail is a conflict

TABLE 3 Discussion

ACCESS TO RIVER RECREATION AND NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS

- General
 - Need a place to fuel motorized boats
 - Algae problems at Ross Island, separate to improve flow

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- Transient boats have relocated to a new location south of the City limits
- Eastside
 - Sellwood Bridge south – lack of parking but could be developed into a park: put boats in, a dock, camping and fire issues and fishing
 - Historic boat dock on east bank north of Sellwood Bridge
 - Portland Boathouse by OMSI closing, Oaks Amusement Park boathouse not sharing. Lake Oswego has a non-profit boathouse, why not Portland? Will this plan consider a Portland funded boathouse?
 - Historic boat launch at Ross Island Bridge head
 - Water taxi or ferry
 - Springwater Corridor Trail – improve river access, use existing railroad underpass.
- Westside
 - Willamette Park – Conflicts between motorized and non-motorized boats, need separate docks, loud music/noise at boat launch
 - Staff Jennings site – Improve public access to river, and add swimming access that is safe and has buoys delineating swim area
 - Willamette Greenway trail needs a less windy route, reduce bike and pedestrian conflicts
 - Fishing at Willamette Park

MINIMIZING CONFLICTS – ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS

- Conflicts on the river between swimmers and boaters and motorized/non-motorized water craft
 - Traffic patterns
 - Designated swimming areas, swimming zones, that are separated by buoys
 - No wake zone buoys
 - Speed boats conflict with novice sailors and kayakers especially around the Willamette Sailing Club
 - Low river levels cause crowding of river recreationalists
 - Learn from other river-centric big cities
- No salmon in the Willamette, can't fish from the shore
- Houseless population causing conflicts with other users
 - Last Friday there were 17 tents between Ross Island dock and the beach
 - Are Ross Island wildlife protected? People camp on the island and there are fires. Can community organize to advocate for enforcement of anti-camping rules?
- Native American use, can we enhance their use?
- Noise on river – early morning rowing coach boats have loud bull horns, cause noise problems and wakes for floating homes
- Boats with wakes – are these boaters aware of their wake impacts?
 - New wake boats cause the biggest problems, can they be banned?
 - Boats that slow down suddenly can cause wake problems
- No wake zones need to cross the entire channel
 - Newer boats create wakes that are so large that they have impacts on the opposite side of the channel

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- Speed
 - Jet skis ignore slow zones
 - If the entire river had a speed limit, people would not obey
 - There could be a speed limit. Doesn't have to be 5 or 10 mph
- Newberg enforces speeding on the Willamette on weekends, issues tickets despite publicity
 - There is no difference in the number of tickets issued on publicized enforcement days and non-publicized enforcement days. Tickets don't seem to influence behavior.
- Dock issues affecting river access
 - Livaboard boats mooring at docks, need long-term mooring location
 - Need sunbathing-only docks
 - Separate users/uses
- Dog conflicts with river users
 - Separate dog park at Sellwood Riverfront Park
- People trying to walk through Portland Rowing Club causes a nuisance -erosion and trash

Overall/General

- Milwaukie boat ramp
- Waverly boat ramp – kayaks
- Improve fish habitat. Where is the City doing improvements? Fix the culvert at Macadam? Steven's Creek?
- A public boathouse would be a great opportunity for natural area education
- Would Ross Island Department of State Lands permit preclude opening the channel to allow the river to flow through the lagoon?
- How do you address the needs of so many different uses?
- Need to create advocacy group for all users
 - Find collaborative solutions

COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT BIG IDEA FOR RECREATION

- Maybe leave Hard Tack Island as habitat only
- Add a Boathouse as a place for all non-motorized users, education and stewardship, like wooden boat center
- Use Oregon Pacific Railroad on eastside as transit from Ochoco St to OMSI

TABLE 4 Discussion

ACCESS TO RIVER RECREATION AND NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS

- Central Reach – Holman Dock near Hawthorne Bridge, improve river access
- Eastside of Ross Island channel – sewer/algae issues
- Lack of pump out facilities
 - Willamette Park would be a good location
- Bacteria monitoring station
- Porta-potties – accessible from water. This comment came from a homeboat or boat owner. She said their association pooled money to provide a public porta-pottie on their docks during the

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busiest months. Other associations could consider doing the same or city could work with dock owners to share costs.

- Old ferry dock locations by Sellwood Bridge – river access points
- Increase bicycle signage at boat access points and surrounding
- Willamette Park - increase boat access, because there is available parking/space
- Staff Jennings site – desire to increase river access but vehicular access to site problematic (promised as part of Sellwood Bridge project but value engineered out)
- Wake boards – enforcement
- Milwaukie Riverfront Park – increase access (work with Milwaukie to increase access points)
- Powers Marine Park
 - Develop non-motorized boat access
 - Limit parking for trailers and cars
- Around the level of SE Haig Street (level), eastside river access, how to access for non-motorized boating?
 - Zidell Yards is going to be a place for non-motorized boating, where riverbank allows for access
 - What about a Tram that provides access and parking to allow people access to the northern tip of Ross Island?
 - Make a beach along the eastside of river/along Springwater Corridor, no trees (it used to have no trees and was a beach), with bicycle parking only, no car parking
- River is a street and a yard
- Powers Marine Park- bonfires

MINIMIZING CONFLICTS – ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS

- Vermont dock levels
 - Busy/unsafe for kayakers
- Waverly Golf Course fertilizer runoff into the river
- East river edge – houseless sites, garbage/remnants, pollution
- River Safety
 - Need more enforcement, increase permit fees to pay for it
 - No wake areas
 - Non-wake boat buffer around moorages
 - Can wake boats issue be approached by noise ordinances/laws?
 - Non-motorized boats need to be respected in downtown/Central Reach area
 - Organized river watch – logging issues
 - Speed limits on river, other cities have done it
 - Jet skis create river safety issues with paddlers
 - Advocate for including Oregon State Marine Board in helping with enforcement via their permits/oversight duties
- Motorized boats
 - Limiting trailer parking would reduce number of large motorized boats on the river
 - Increase parking fee at Willamette Park, enforce Willamette Park parking lots as often people park without paying

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- Lack of awareness and respect for variety of users— signage for bike areas, improve no wake
- Education/Enforcement
 - Boater licensing process to better educate boater
 - Volunteer monitors/educators alongside enforcement
 - Camera ticketing
 - Individual moorage contracting with Sheriff's Department for private security on river
 - Rack up calls to non-emergency police, build statistics
 - Increase fines -2 or 3 strikes and boating license rescinded
 - Create water craft endorsement (like for motorcycles) that can be pulled
 - Collaborate with wildlife organizations to pressure/advocate for an increase in law enforcement
- Docks
 - Strategic use of docks that bring together different users
 - Designate each dock for specific uses
 - Collaborate with Lewis and Clark College (docks south of Powers Marine)
 - Docks give options for wildlife as some have observed that there is some regular use of these structures by otters and birds
- Wake Impacts and the Environment
 - Wake action is silting up Stephens Creek/river connection, impacting juvenile salmon
- Liveaboard Boaters
 - Limiting use of river and banks and impeding navigation, these are non-registered boaters, (sharp rise in last 5 years), need to reach out to these folks and collaborate with south jurisdictions to expand options

COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT BIG IDEA FOR RECREATION

- SW Richardson St/Boundary St viewpoints and south, worthy of protection (at least 6). Whole area needs to be scenic.
- None of the view streets here are real