

River Plan/South Reach Eastside Meeting

Summary Notes

Nov 8, 2018 – SMILE Station

The focus of this meeting was to review and discuss issues particularly relevant to the Eastside of the Willamette River. Participants were given a very brief introduction to each of the four tables and instructed to select three of these tables to attend. Three 35-minute sessions were facilitated by City staff. A short wrap-up was provided to the whole group at the end of the session.

Participant input from the five tables are described below.

TABLE 1 – TRANSPORTATION & TRAILS

Brooklyn Transportation Network and Access

- River Access
 - Direct access to Springwater/river is wanted and needed. Miles of trail between access points in Central City and Sellwood.
 - Brooklyn access – neighbors want to be able to bring down boats.
 - If Ross Island becomes a park, access will be needed.
 - Haig Street may not be the best option for future connection.
 - Brooklyn neighbors use Oaks Bottom access point.
 - SE Mitchell St and SE 17th Ave conflict point – steep, dangerous.
- Bike Network
 - SE 9th Ave and SE 16th Ave feel the safest.
 - SE Center St used east to west – lots of traffic.
 - SE Rhine / SE Rhone [@ grade or above grade crossing?] – potential connection to future river access – lower traffic volumes
 - Holgate access could be like the Lafayette Overpass
 - Other ideas include something like the Oregon City Municipal Elevator or a funicular
 - SE Boise St – private, industrial access point. Potential for agreement with Ross Island Sand and Gravel.
 - Would people use it even if it's possible?
 - Tunnel? Underpass?
 - Currently use pedestrian bridge on SE 9th Ave to go north (across SE Powell Blvd) and access Springwater.
 - Bicycle roundabout at SE Milwaukie Ave and SE Mitchell St hasn't improved Brooklyn access to river.
 - Neighbors use a combination of low volume residential streets (to avoid SE Milwaukie Ave to the extent possible) to get to SE Mitchell St access point to Springwater (Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge Trailhead).

Springwater Corridor Design

- Improvements for next 2 to 5 years
 - Lights, benches
 - Adding lighting can ruin the natural areas; use low lighting that only lights path. Possibly motion activated.

River Plan/South Reach Eastside Meeting

Summary Notes

Nov 8, 2018 – SMILE Station

- Speeds
 - Slower speeds
 - Improve network so people don't speed on Springwater while commuting.
 - Rumble strips to slow speeds
- Separation
 - Wider trail w/ separation.
 - Walk and bike lanes, like the new Sellwood Bridge
- Wayfinding – nice to know how far until next exit, etc.
 - Signage to notify about access points. People get lost.
 - Path signage show you what streets lead you to Springwater and how to get out.
 - Maps with mile posts and other locators.
- Safety
 - Don't go down there at night because of camping.
- Public Restrooms
 - There are long distances without a restroom.
- NW Trail Alliance
 - Work to add an off-road mountain bike trail parallel to the Springwater Trail.

Spokane Crossing

- Existing Conditions/Issues
 - Conflicts with streets, trails – lots of cut-through traffic on SE 6th heading to Sellwood Bridge.
 - Trail along river (next to Sellwood Park) is the 'trail to nowhere'
 - Used predominately for dog walking.
 - This is a temporal problem. It's bad in the summer months, especially when there are events (ex. Oktoberfest) but it's not an issue in the off season.
 - Limited Parking in the area.
- Traffic Calming / Access Management:
 - Proposed bridge or underpass for Springwater Corridor Trail over SE Spokane St.
 - Move bike and peds from conflict points
 - Redevelopment of the surface parking lot adjacent Oaks Park and SE Spokane St intersection could reroute trail and improve traffic flow.
 - Signage and education on the trail to help direct cyclists as they move through the intersection.
 - Paint on intersection that guides all modes.
 - Add a signal or rapid flashing beacon for weekend traffic control.
- Access to River:
 - Water taxi to bring bikes and pedestrians across river.
 - Shoreline: People picnic and fish on shore between Spokane and Sellwood Bridge.
 - Remove boulders to make a nicer place to hang out.
 - Add new boat launch and storage space on SE Spokane St.
 - Boat launch = more demand, more traffic.

River Plan/South Reach Eastside Meeting

Summary Notes

Nov 8, 2018 – SMILE Station

- A question about ferry as a viable transportation option.

Transit

- Frequent transit service east-west needed on Tacoma.
- Transit to Oaks Park would help alleviate parking issue.
- SE Ochoco St industrial land could be used on the weekends as a park and ride. Trolley could transport folks to Oaks Park and OMSI.
- The rail line / frozen pizza trolley is currently very useful.

TABLE 2 – PARKS & RECREATION

- Sellwood Riverfront Park
 - Dogs
 - Corral the dogs at the park
 - Fencing would help
 - Dog park tends to subside in summer with concerts
 - The whole beach is a dog park; preserve some part of the beach for dog access – Napa example: dedicated dog beach and fenced areas
 - Official dog park area is not clear; dogs access the beach and water – separate the dog beach from the swimming beach
 - Walking dogs along the trail – waste baskets needed along the trail (people hang bags along the fence)
 - Existing staircases to beach – could one of these be for dogs? Seems like this would be hard to enforce
 - West side of Sellwood Park along the bluff may be a better place for dogs; it is an underutilized part of the park
 - Is it possible to create a water feature for dogs away from the beach – pond/splash pool?
 - Homeless camping along beach and adjacent wooded area
 - Floating buoy lines could be used to separate/designate swimming areas; could separate people from dogs
 - Boat dock has boats much of the time; can have conflicts with swimmers and dogs
- Oaks Amusement Park
 - Boat/kayak access along the shoreline
 - Oaks Park would like to have a dock for motorized boats; also interested in two docks: motorized and non-motorized
 - Some shoreline is fairly deep or too deep for personal watercraft
 - A gang plank going down to a dock nearer the houseboats; the water is fairly shallow
 - 1990's – Oaks Park and City had discussed a boat dock placement partnership
 - Kayak/canoe parking storage/rental would allow people to walk/bike and not just drive each time for boating
 - All along the shoreline is a sandy beach that is an informal swimming area (popular)
 - It would be nice to have an outdoor shower for swimmers/changing rooms/bathrooms

River Plan/South Reach Eastside Meeting

Summary Notes

Nov 8, 2018 – SMILE Station

- “Stars on the Map” – Oaks Park is open to having an improved trail connection along their property during open hours – not at night due to protection of assets and safety concerns (kids climbing on roller coasters)
 - Built walkway from beach to Ross Island?
 - Nearest bus stop is SE 9th Ave and SE Spokane St; Oaks Park has considered providing shuttles
- Spokane St River Access
 - Currently an informal boat launch where ferry access once was (used to cross the river before the Sellwood Bridge was built)
 - Issues: giant potholes currently; don’t know where people would park; don’t want to attract more vehicles
 - All swim/beach areas need underwater rocks removed that could be hazardous to swimmers
 - Signage needed
 - Station for life jackets for use/rental
- Oaks Bottom
 - Bybee bluff is an amazing viewpoint and walk that could be improved/enhanced – think Willamette Blvd and other bluffs in the city
 - Observation deck in Oaks Bottom is fantastic
 - Signage at Powell Butte that involved tribal history is beautiful; more interpretive signage at Oaks Bottom would be great (enviro education, cultural, etc.)
 - Add benches and bird blind
 - Benches needed for some walkers (older people/pregnant individuals/small children) to rest and then make the full loop
- Swimming
 - Neighborhood could benefit from a designated swimming area
 - There is a nice private beach for swimming just north of the houseboats (Oregon Yacht Club)
 - Delineate between boating and swimming
- Fishing
 - A SMILE community member wants to start a fishing club in Sellwood
 - Oaks Amusement Park is open to fishing along their shoreline
- Non-motorized Boating
 - Issue with non-motorized boating is that you have to drive to the river; one idea is to have time limit or paid parking
 - If a non-motorized boathouse were established, people would pay – Oaks Amusement Park?
- Trails
 - Riverside trail adjacent to the Springwater Corridor Trail (off the trailhead) is not well known; better signage here
 - Question on whether to develop a trail to connect Llewellyn School to Oaks Bottom (via north end of Portland Memorial Mausoleum property)

River Plan/South Reach Eastside Meeting

Summary Notes

Nov 8, 2018 – SMILE Station

- North End of Portland Memorial Mausoleum Site (also referred to as Moreland Woods)
 - Any opportunity for access appreciated
 - Farmer's market parks their trucks there
 - Also used as an informal dog park
 - Staircase could be built to connect the site to Oaks Bottom
- Linn Street Viewpoint
 - Located in the right-of-way at the western end of Linn Street
 - Bench/view area is privately maintained
 - A split rail fence is needed for safety; two dogs got stuck off the ledge
 - Should be improved/maintained
- Water Transit
 - With a boat launch, could there be a river ferry? Frog Ferry is a company considering access/feasibility along the Willamette River
- Other Ideas
 - Any broader study/effort on how the river is going to be used for recreation?
 - Add amenities and don't necessarily worry about parking
 - Reach out to educators for what amenities could be considered along the South Reach to support youth/education

TABLE 3 – NATURAL RESOURCES

- Landscape Requirements
 - It may not be necessary to prohibit trees in the view corridor. Trees can frame views when placed appropriately.
 - Be sure that the plants installed in each subarea meet the desired functions of the area. Create a preferred plant list for the different subareas.
- Replanting Requirements
 - Additional inspections should be conducted to ensure that plants required to be planted survive: first within the first 2 years and then at 2 years
 - Establish a standard for survival
 - Potential for requiring follow-up by the applicant to ensure long-term survival of (re)plantings – required to submit photos to the City documenting survival at established milestones? Other creative strategies that minimize demands on City staff?
- Riverbank Vegetation
 - Black cottonwoods
 - Nearby residents have issues with the mess and impacts resulting from cottonwoods along the river; is there a way to discourage the planting of cottonwoods?
 - Black cottonwood is a native bottomland hardwood forest species that exemplifies the habitat type that used to blanket the land adjacent to the Willamette River.
 - Cottonwoods are a favorite of at least one person at the table.

River Plan/South Reach Eastside Meeting

Summary Notes

Nov 8, 2018 – SMILE Station

- Oregon ash is not a BES-preferred species due to the potential for Emerald Ash Borer infestation.
- Willow is important along the river.
- Mitigation
 - Mitigation should be in the South Reach (not allowed elsewhere in the Willamette, etc.)
 - In some cases, it might make sense to be able to consolidate mitigation projects so that larger areas can be preserved and increased ecological benefits can be achieved.
- Violations
 - Need to be sure City staff has a good understanding of what was on site prior to the violation so that the proposed solution responds directly to impacts.
- Ross Island
 - Access/Protection
 - The area should be preserved as a natural area with the highest level of protection because it is a unique reserve for the city.
 - Some limited access would be good. Would like a kayak trail with a few places to stop around the island.
 - Ross Island Sand & Gravel (RISG) owns along the waterfront in the lagoon. This arrangement was maintained so that RISG could manage use within the lagoon.
 - 20 years from now, all of Ross Island should be a bird sanctuary
 - Algal Blooms
 - Occurred 3 of the last 4 years
 - Split the island back into 2 islands (as it was historically) to increase flow and reduce chances of blooms?
 - There may be challenges with this solution due to the potential for releasing previously-capped toxic soils on the bottom and shoreline of the lagoon
 - No one has spoken to RISG representatives about this possibility
 - An Oregon State University engineering professor is using Ross Island as a case study in a capstone course. Students will be evaluating 6 alternatives to address the issue, including a tide gate, splitting of the island, and others
 - Wildlife/Vegetation
 - Herons and bald eagles reside on Ross Island
 - There is significant restoration potential around the island and in the lagoon
 - Important to have a management plan for Ross Island; City staff should prepare it.
 - It would take fill equal to 10 Big Pink (US Bank) buildings to replenish material dredged from the lagoon
 - Other ideas
 - It would be great if RISG diesel emissions could be reduced.
 - A complaint to the Bureau of Development Services related to the RISG Conditional Use permit for the processing of material on the island. The existing Conditional Use permit has expired and processing is not allowed in the Open Space base zone.

River Plan/South Reach Eastside Meeting

Summary Notes

Nov 8, 2018 – SMILE Station

- Other Ideas
 - Be sure that new regulations don't conflict with state or Federal regulations.
 - Wakes
 - Area should be a no wake zone
 - Wake devices should be banned; another jurisdiction in Oregon reportedly banned these but that is still to be confirmed

TABLE 4 – RIVER AREA DEVELOPMENT & STANDARDS

- Bridgeheads
 - Placemaking of bridgehead (referring to Sellwood), to connect/view river from bridge
 - Build upon history and keep things that are important (such as development along historic trolley lines)
- River setback requirement – Currently 25 feet in the South Reach; 50 feet in the Central Reach. Staff's initial proposal is to increase the setback to 50 feet in the South Reach.
 - No concern expressed about increasing the river setback.
 - (A number of people) Support a wider greenway setback - a minimum of 50 feet
 - Support a greater river setback, at least 50 feet, flexible if 50 feet or 75 feet
 - More setback is better, minimum 50 feet but maybe 100 feet
- River Overlay Zones Setback Encroachment - Allows for a 5' encroachment into the river setback as long as a protected area equal to the encroachment is extended landward of the setback
 - Not opposed to encroachment and more flexibility with an offset and if there is a net benefit biologically
- Nonconforming uses and development – These are existing uses and buildings that no longer meet current requirements. Approximately 40 structures within the current setback are estimated to be nonconforming. City staff estimate that expanding the setback to 50 feet would increase that number to 60 buildings. Currently, nonconforming uses and development in the setback cannot expand beyond the existing building footprint. Expansion in height in the setback is allowed in the River Water Quality overlay zone.
 - Restrict increase in square footage, no building additional stories
 - Situation dependent rebuild after a natural disaster – rebuild with current setback regulations if can, if not can rebuild at pre-disaster footprint in the setback
 - Rebuild in river setback (meet current requirements), but could be difficult depending on circumstances
 - Yes, to rebuilding within existing footprint after a fire
 - Support pushing rebuilding outside of river setback. There is a public benefit of restoration after a building is destroyed
 - Floods are a questionable problem with replacing nonconforming structures
 - There's nothing like liquefaction insurance
 - No building up, especially nonconforming multi-family development
 - Support for forcing people to meet setback if rebuilding

River Plan/South Reach Eastside Meeting

Summary Notes

Nov 8, 2018 – SMILE Station

- Allowances and Restrictions
 - Fuel station needed for motorized boats now that Staff Jennings is gone
 - Like allowing small footprint of retail in Open Space zone for easier access for kayak rentals and recreation
- Other ideas
 - More bicycle and pedestrian connections to the Willamette Greenway Trail on the westside
 - No new rip rap along the riverbank
 - Prioritize salmon over recreation