



**METRO**

**MEETING SUMMARY OF THE BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE FOR TRAILS  
MEETING 3**

Monday, July 7, 2008, 4:00-6:00 p.m.  
Metro Council Chamber/Annex

Members Present: Eileen Brady, Scott Bricker, Rex Burkholder, Chris Enlow, Steve Faulstick, Jay Graves, Cynthia Haruyama, Al Jubitz, Julie A. Keil, Richard Kidd, Randy Leonard, Nichole Maher, Rod Monroe, Rick Potestio, Dave Underriner, Dave Yaden

Members Absent: Phil Wu, Dick Schouten, Ian Yolles

Chair Dave Yaden convened the Blue Ribbon Committee for Trails at 4:05 p.m.

1. Committee communications for non-agenda items

Council President David Bragdon introduced the “Walk There Guide”, thanked partners and informed the committee that the walking maps could also be downloaded from the Metro website.

Council President Bragdon reminded committee members about the Policy Makers Ride on July 11.

Councilor Rex Burkholder reported on Congressman Blumenauer’s meeting on renewing and rebuilding America’s infrastructure. Three panels strongly emphasized the connection between transportation, energy and water. The meeting highlighted viewing communities holistically to provide with citizens options, and emphasized that infrastructure should be a key federal concern.

2. Approval of meeting summary questions and comments about homework and the agenda

Jay Graves asked for clarity on Senator Monroe’s comment on page 2 of the Meeting 2 Summary.

Senator Rod Monroe stated that he sits on the Transportation Funding Task Force. The goal of the task force is to put together a package that is balanced both modally and regionally, that the region can enact without being referred.

Scott Bricker commented on question #9, page 4 of the Question and Follow Up Answers document. Bricker felt the answer was unrealistic and stressed to committee members the importance of a balance between the access that trails provide the public and the environmental impact they can have.

Janet Bebb, Metro staff, responded that Metro is taking the lead with the Connecting Green Alliance restoration group to identify potential impacts to wildlife species and habitats of concern within the 20 trail packages.

### 3. Presentation: The Trails Network as a System

Ms. Bebb presented a PowerPoint showing the trail system's connectivity. The presentation highlighted the systems' connection to commuter routes/Max trains, population centers, and parks and greenspaces.

Ms. Bebb stated that staff does not have the "data" to show connections to "special places" but is working on the concept. Special places are a central objective in trail placement.

Nichole Maher commented that it is important to be conscientious of connecting trails to low income areas where there are significant deficiencies in access to parks and greenspaces. She added that there was valuable data collected by the Regional Equity Atlas showing how impoverished communities do not have equal access to park and trails

Ms. Bebb responded that staff would provide information on income levels and access to the 20 trail packages

Al Jubitz commented that he seconded Nicole's comment and stressed that it is important that the trails connect to all neighborhoods. He also requested a map overlay to show "income profiles" as they relate to the trails.

Chair Yaden asked the group if there were any more comments questions or requests for information from staff pertaining to the presentation.

### 4. Questions About Trail Benefits

Chair Yaden informed the committee that the primary goal for the meeting was to establish the most compelling values and benefits of the system, arguments against accelerating development of the system, and discussion (straw vote) on whether development of the system should be accelerated.

Chair Yaden asked the committee to raise questions or make comments about the data received in meeting packet 3.

Mr. Jubitz comment on the health dangers associated with air quality being within ½ mile of high automobile use. He added that freeways decrease property values and trails increase property values.

Councilor Burkholder stated an idea prevalent in South America was the notion of creating a public space for residents to get to know each other and experience a sense of community. He felt trails can serve this function, although this may not be quantifiable as a key benefit.

Jay Graves commented that he was surprised to not see any data pertaining to mental health and the social family benefits and would like to find research to add this to the case.

Eileen Brady suggested the committee weigh the benefits to see which ones may have the strongest cases. She added that she did not see any data on the epidemiology of lifestyle choices in relation to biking. She suggested staff search out this information to see if there was any demographic data in relation to the number of trails in an area. Ms. Brady added that clusters could be created that spread the value people get from biking and exercising more by putting trails in new locations. The health benefits could then be leveraged.

Mike Wetter responded that staff would research this issue and added that staff did have data showing that when trails are in proximity to neighborhoods those neighborhoods will use it – the “build it and they will come” concept.

Ms. Brady added, “If you build it they will come, and then tell their friends and family”. The impact could be quantifiable.

Ms. Maher added that the Northwest Health Foundation could be a data resource. She noted that the foundation has done a tremendous amount work about how trails and parks specifically impact communities. Contact is Thomas Aschenbrener.

Senator Monroe pointed to the Springwater Trail’s three bridges as a success story of “build it and they will come” for the region. He stated that the \$5 million dollar investment made a decade ago has really paid off. Use of the trail has increased.

Chair Yaden summarized two topics that the committee would like more information on.

1. Additional benefits to having the “system” built out, such as use by populations that do not currently use trails.

2. Added community or mental health benefits from trails. Chair Yaden used the example “How much would you pay to not have Mt. Hood go away”. He added that there are ways to identify community assets even for non-users and whatever information gets at that idea would be helpful.

Mr. Bricker noted that this region possesses the commitment, dedication and leadership described in the European Mode Share case study. He noted that it would be good to describe some of the many success stories from the Portland metropolitan region in a similar way.

## 5. Arguments for and against accelerating development of the regional trail system

Chair Yaden introduced the main arguments from committee members for and against accelerating development of the regional trail system. He asked the committee to break into pairs to discuss their arguments. The committee then reconvened to discuss their ideas.

Senator Monroe read his argument for accelerating the trail system. He highlighted benefits including increased bike safety and ridership, encouraging physical activity which leads to reduced medical costs, increased property values (freeways decrease property values), enhanced neighborhoods, the low cost to build trails compared with other infrastructure projects.

Julie Kein stated that the most compelling argument for accelerating development was this is a once in a life time political confluence of environmental concerns; carbon emissions, rising gas prices, the war in Iraq, and the economy.

Dave Underriner added that the benefits of health and wellness usually take an incentive to create a movement or move beyond the average. He believes concerns regarding the cost of transportation create the opportunity to link the two.

Councilor Burkholder stated that the trails are an opportunity to get out and enjoy your community.

Mayor Richard Kidd stated that trails in a community provide connectivity within that community and trails between communities connect those communities together. He added that trails provide a nature education experience for youth.

Chair Yaden expanded on the transportation argument adding that it is important to offer people choices in travel modes.

Steve Faulstick stated the trails provide economic gain to the area by adding to the Portland area’s reputation as a “green travel destination” in the \$4 billion dollar tourism industry.

Councilor Burkholder commented that trails give children independence and allow them to move within and participate in their community safely and in a manner in which people/parents feel comfortable with.

Mr. Jubitz stated that some trails are designed for commuting and other for recreation and should not need to be built out to the same standard. He hoped the committee would try to define what commuters need as opposed to what recreationalists need, perhaps making some trails less costly to build.

Ms. Brady added that when you think about the system in each segment you get different case statements that could be associated with different funding options.

Examples:

Transportation: concerns about rising costs of oil/gas, commuting options for low income people, health of community that can be improved by added the physical activity of bike commuting.

Recreation: Economic development, recruitment of talent to the region, tourism.

Chris Enlow commented that this country has a transportation system based on single car drivers. He stated that there is a need to move beyond that system and prepare for the future similar to what Europe did thirty years ago. As far as the accelerated rate of going forward we need to think about that infrastructure and break it down into the two terms of recreation vs. commuter and decide where the sales pitch goes faster first.

Mr. Graves asked that the term sustainability be added as an argument under both the categories of economy and environment on the whiteboard. He added that another economic benefit of building trails is the value and return on investment the city gets from investing a small amount in bike trails and the large percentage of people using bike trails.

Cynthia Haruyama commented that even though we are building the trails for use by bicyclists and pedestrians we need to speak to all taxpayers in terms they can relate to such as easing traffic congestion and providing recreational opportunities. She added that over time Europe has shown that having a trail infrastructure will change a larger groups behavior.

Councilor Burkholder reiterated the importance of the “urgency of the situation” as an argument for acceleration of the trails system. He added that the Nature Conservancy completed a poll of Oregonians’ attitudes regarding climate change and willingness to spend money and make sacrifices to improve it; 73 % of people

polled thought it their moral responsibility to reduce global warming pollution. This supports the “urgency” argument.

Ms. Keil commented that amenities such as trails reduce some problems of urban density and making communities more livable.

Chair Yaden asked the committee to look at what is on the white board (benefits of trails – arguments for acceleration) and to add to or challenge and question any points made.

Senator Monroe commented that the region was able to draw a top community college president David Sygielski because of the natural experiences and atmosphere Portland has to offer.

An audience member added that trails such as Sullivan’s Gulch would spur development in an area.

An audience member commented that trails could be used for police & fire protection, and public utilities.

Rick Potestio commented on the classification (commuter or recreation) of trails mentioned earlier and that trails are not necessarily exclusively commuter or recreation. He felt that people would be using the same trail for different purposes so trail design is critical to accommodate all uses and eliminate conflicts.

Mr. Potestio told a story about a region in Italy enhancing their cultural experience through the trail system. The region has created a multiple course “Walking Dinner” along a trail each stop exemplified by the cuisine of that town.

Mr. Jubitz added that the committee should think about having secure bicycle storage at all Max stations and bus stops to help integrate multimodal models and encourage leaving the car at home.

Chair Yaden asked the committee to look at the arguments for acceleration and to indicate if they feel comfortable with the solidity and evidence for each argument

Mr. Bricker added to the “independent children” argument stating that the argument is appealing to adults from a legacy standpoint, “You remember liking doing those things as a kid but your kids can’t do them today”.

Mayor Kidd added that it is very important to members of the community to have a safe place for their kids to ride a bike.

Senator Monroe stated that trails are important to have for a safe route to school. He added that schools are busing children from as little as a ½ mile away due to

lack of sidewalks and safe routes. Trails would be beneficial for children and society and save on fossil fuels wasted driving the busses.

Mayor Kidd added that schools should provide bike racks and cities should help provide safe trails to and from school.

Senator Monroe added that high schools should not have to provide vast acres of parking for students when they are given other options of how to get to school. They should have to pay for parking if they want to drive their cars to school

Councilor Burkholder asked if staff could provide data that shows reduced congestion when more trails are added.

Ms. Brady commented that the three E's (Economy, Environment, Equity) were a great way to think about the arguments but felt they should not be presented that way . She felt it would be more effective to lead with hard concrete issues and know the three E's were underneath.

Chair Yaden asked the committee to put together the top three arguments for acceleration or a summary statement from the discussion.

Mr. Wetter added that there are many individual arguments but tat a few ideas cut across the categories of the arguments

- Confluence of trend lines: global warming, price of gas
- Need for different case statements for different purposes
- Notion about overall culture
- Notion of urgency (The time is now)

Senator Monroe commented that the trails are a logical extension of our overall transportation infrastructure. Past visionaries had other infrastructure visions, which took decades to build, and we are the beneficiaries. The trails are an infrastructure alternative that may take decades to build and we are the visionaries.

Ms. Haruyama added that an additional compelling reason to do it now is climate change and traffic congestion.

Ms. Brady stated that the approach should focus on the issues most important to the public at large, and politically hot right now including: health, oil and energy, need for a green economy, and traffic congestion.

Mr. Potestio suggested taking the argument from the objectives standpoint –the objectives are health, increased property values, lower cost, enhanced communities and we want to achieve them through a means of transportation. Trails would be best able to optimize these objectives – what besides trails can you do this with?

Ms. Brady suggested a new marketing strategy as the “New Oregon Trail” the first one led us across the country, this one is going to lead us into the next century.

Mr. Bricker stated that air quality is a key concern that can resonate with many of the other issues and is quantifiable and shown in many case studies. He added that it would be a critical one to lead with.

Senator Monroe stated that people are angry and afraid and looking for transportation alternatives --the urgency is a huge window of opportunity.

Councilor Burkholder suggested that in terms of marketing this is a positive and non-threatening argument that offers a people an alternative and speaks to what kind of future we want to leave our kids. The arguments can be framed as kid and family friendly and looking toward the future.

Mr. Enlow commented that we need a little humbleness; there are existing examples around the world of people that have had forethought of infrastructure that moves the masses. He added that we are in a critical moment and should look to examples, not necessarily creating something that has never been done, but creating something that makes sense.

Mr. Bricker stated that transportation advocates are fighting for percentages of pennies on the dollar. He added that from the community standpoint, cost, choice and urgency are huge issues when you start to speak to decision makers and business leaders. There needs to be more savvy arguments.

Chair Yaden wrapped up the arguments for acceleration stating that while no argument stands out by itself no other urban infrastructure gives so many benefits at so little relative cost with so few relative bad side effects.

Chair Yaden asked the committee to give arguments against acceleration of developing the regional trail network. The committee generated the following arguments against acceleration:

You will never be able to build it so why start  
You can build on street bike corridors at a much lower cost  
The majority of the people will not benefit – there are few trail users  
This is not a high priority when schools, police and firefighters, and other infrastructure are under funded – they may be competing for the same funds.  
Trails are for the privileged few – environmentalists  
It rains so much in Oregon - who will use in the rain?  
Maintenance and upkeep is a long term challenge funding issue  
10,000 commuters - money should be used to widen the street  
Not in my backyard  
More dangerous than safe – homeless/criminals

Transportation has strong lobbyists  
Trails don't poll as well as other environmental issues  
Not enough people would use it to justify the cost  
Isolating it rather than tying it to broader transportation topic  
Environmental impacts

Chair Yaden asked the committee to break down the list into the truly substantive issues using cost as an example.

Councilor Burkholder stated environmental impacts as the first issue.

Senator Monroe commented that the argument that you hear a majority of the time was that most people drive cars and will always drive cars therefore the number one priority should be that we give people more places and wider lanes to drive their cars. They do not see the benefit to car drivers from transit and options like trails, reduced congestion.

Commissioner Randy Leonard stated that as obvious as some solutions sounds there are obstacles that one cannot even imagine that come out of the woodwork. Trails are an expensive proposition and there have been huge fights just to come up with money to create safe bike lanes. He wondered how we could ever come up with the funds other than a ballot measure to construct the system. He added that he is unsure where trails land high in the list of priorities when you add pressing issues like the light rail, streetcar, parks, I-5 Bridge, and public reactions to funding such as confronting the gas tax.

Commissioner Leonard added that good leadership can take circumstances and address them in a way that sells the package.

6. Should the region accelerate development of the regional trails system?

Chair Yaden asked the committee to participate in a preliminary discussion and take a straw vote on whether the committee thinks it has a strong enough case to accelerate development of the system.

Current build out rate: \$5 Million per year will take 200 years  
To build the system in 50 years will take \$40 million per year  
To build the system in 25 years will take \$20 million per year

Mr. Graves commented that the committee needs know what the package would look like and where funding would come from before they could hone in on a number of years to complete the system.

Commissioner Leonard stated that the dollar amount does not mean much unless you know what the source of the funding is; funding needs to be discussed in

context of what it is competing against (other priorities). He added that where political will is strong enough you can find a solution.

Ms. Keil commented that a program that accelerated over time might be more an efficient way to build out the system by allowing you to gain momentum through success stories

Councilor Burkholder stated the 25-year breakdown was about \$7 dollars per household per month, which is in the realm of possibilities. It is important to break down cost into understandable terms to the public such as cost per household per month and it can be done in phases and accelerated overtime as opposed to an upfront huge price tag being an overall deal killer.

Mr. Bricker commented that in transportation multiple billions of dollars for one project is acceptable for some projects but not for others. He added that if there is real belief that they are the place where they have the opportunity to drastically change, it is important to put that robust vision on the table as opposed to water it down.

Mr. Potestio stated it should be framed as a very large visionary holistic package so it is thought of as something independent and desired in and of itself.

Mr. Wetter asked the committee if they think there is a case regardless of the sources or speed of the development.

Ms. Brady commented that she was personally intrigued by the trail system but has not heard a solid argument for trails vs. stripping the road for bike paths and investing more in the bike infrastructures of the roads being built

Mr. Jubitz responded that there are two concepts at work: connecting the cores to towns and connecting green. He noted that it seems that the force field is pointing to giving people an alternative of how to get the work and how can we make it safe for them to do so – connecting cores.

He asked to have staff present Connecting Core as a concept vs. Connecting Green as a follow up to the voted on green corridors.

Chair Yaden asked the committee members to voice if they were not convinced that we have a case for a significant acceleration of developing the regional trail system.

Commissioner Leonard commented that if it were tied to the topical issue of the cost of getting around town and framed in terms of creating a system where people could commute using bicycles it would change the discussion to something that would be much more successful.

Senator Monroe suggested that the manner in which the existing trails were funded is looked at including Metro open spaces money and federal money.

Councilor Burkholder commented that as we put the trails together they are part of a system. He added that in Portland there are small streets where one can get around by bike but in the more suburban areas the streets are not as conducive to biking and walking. Burkholder also stated that if we are going to address climate change and energy issues, we need to offer transportation choices. The trails are part of a package of making a choice available to people.

Chair Yaden reiterated that this is a unique moment in time where the old transportation model is over and the timing is right to offer a potential new model.

Mr. Underriner agreed that there is a need to seize the moment. He added that people are having trouble meeting the costs of car commuting and there is a need to provide options. He felt that while this argument diminishes the recreation component the idea could be sold on the transportation element.

Mr. Potestio stated that there is a definitely need to provide options for the suburban areas to get to the city and back. He agreed that alternative transportation is a stronger argument, though the recreation component is compelling.

Mr. Graves commented that he had spoken to Earl Blumenauer regarding how the trail system could be funded and he had responded that these ideas are absolutely on the minds at the national level and that we should be thinking about federal match.

## 7. Announcements and other business

Ms. Bebb informed the committee that a case statement for Portland and the Portland Metro Region had been submitted to the Rails to Trails Conservancy Local 2010 Campaign for Active Transportation. She added that the case statement referenced the committee and is posted on the Blue Ribbon Committee website.

Randy Tucker, Metro staff, gave a brief update on the state transportation package. The Governor's Vision Committee, which is responsible for the state transportation package, has broken into three sub-committees, one being a multi modal sub-committee chaired by Councilor Rex Burkholder. The multimodal sub-committee had recommended (as a placeholder) a new program for trails that may be part of the new Connect Oregon III package.

Robert Spurlock, Metro staff, announced the upcoming Northwest Willamette Greenway Stroll on July 9.

Mr. Underriner reminded committee members of the upcoming Bridge Pedal on August 10.

Audience member Pat Wagner asked for the committee's support in requesting more time for the review period of the document regarding to the City of Linnton's trails.

#### 10. Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Blue Ribbon Committee for Trails, Chair Dave Yaden adjourned the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

Prepared by Kristin Blyler  
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